

arthur

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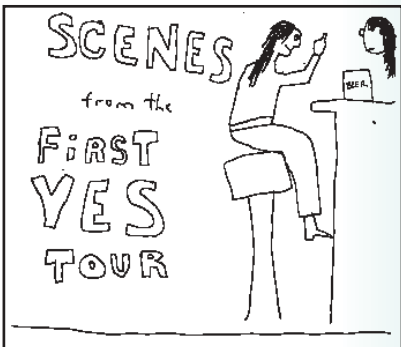
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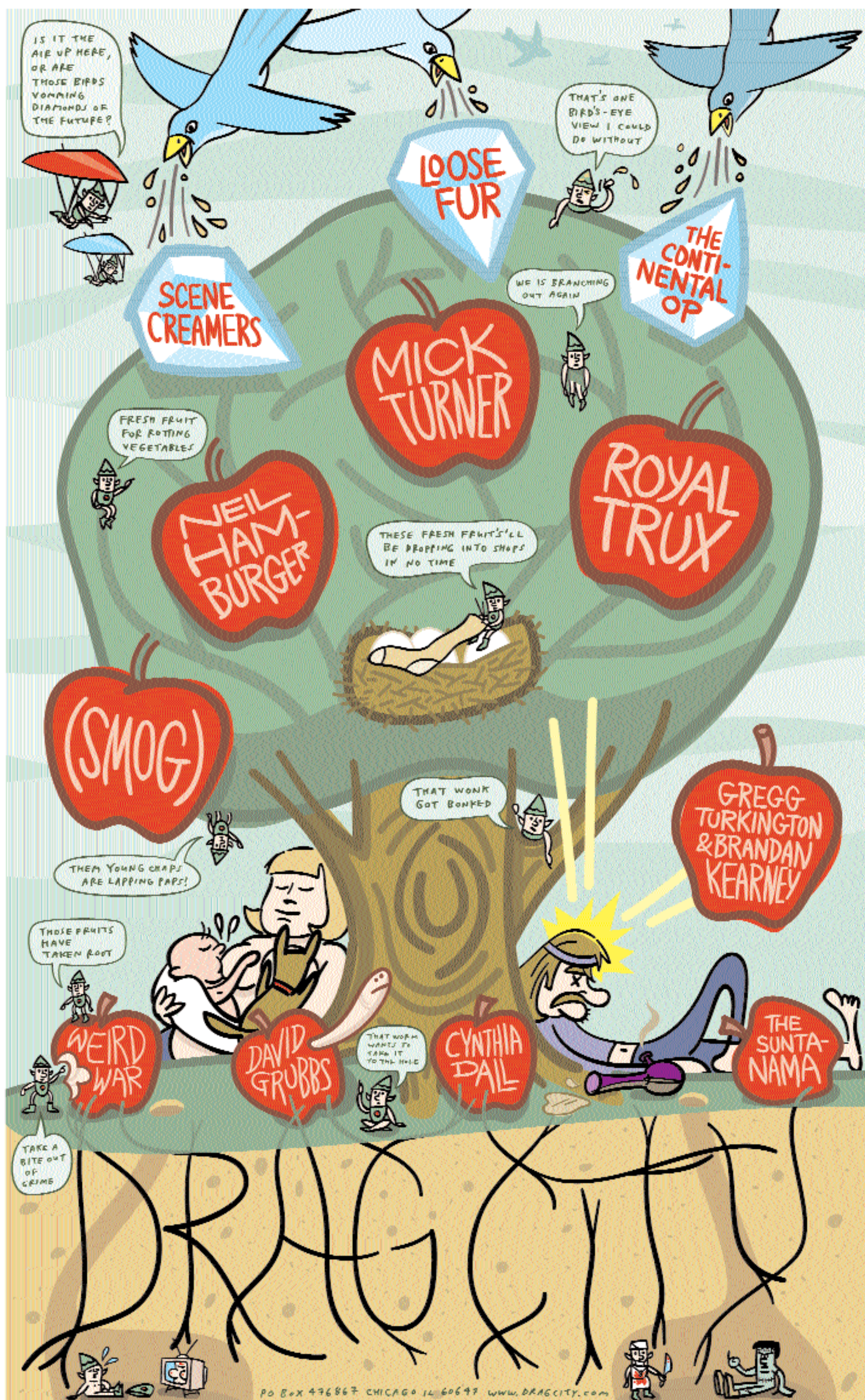
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arthur

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LARIS KRESLINS
PUBLISHER

JAY BABCOCK
EDITOR

W. T. NELSON
ART DIRECTOR

JAMIE FRASER
ADVERTISING

MARK LEWMAN
PAUL CULLUM
KRISTINE MCKENNA
SHAWN MORTENSEN
SENIOR ADVISORS

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Subject:

B.O.C. concert transcript text

Date: Mon, 09 Sep 2002 19:18:22 -0700

From: Jay Babcock

<editorial@arthur mag.com>

Organization: Arthur

To: "W. T."

<mail@thumbprint press.com>

BLUE OYSTER CULT '76 CONCERT RAP TRANSCRIPT

"Alright now, I wanna talk to you all about this song, the name of this song is Dominance and Submission. Now along about this time every night I like to get down with a little Dominance and Submission, tell you all about it. Now, Dominance and Submission, why that can mean a lot of things in your life. Some of them bother me, some of them bother you. I'll tell you about two of 'em here tonight. Only because this is so close to my heart and I'm sure it's close to yours too. Tonight I want to talk to you about getting high a little bit. [cheers] Now, from what I understand, all my friends here, all 14-15,000 of you people here tonight, get a little hassled on the way in. Maybe somebody's taken away something from you that you paid some good money for just to get high for the show. [bass blast] Now that's not so unusual considering how close to Washington DC this place is. I wanna ask you a question, you tell me if this is true: You ever wonder why the price of good Colombian keeps getting higher all the time? [cheers] I'll tell you why, here's the answer, it's very simple: it has to do with all those people who work there in those big buildings in Washington DC. Some of you people, you might think there's nothing you can do about it but you're wrong, there's plenty you can do about it, I'll tell you what. You know, here we are in Maryland playing a little rock n roll for you people, you don't want to... In the whole world, there's no place better to play rock n roll in than the United States of America. [cheers] We played everywhere. Without a doubt, I will tell you. We've been to Scandinavia, we've been to Germany, we've been to Spain, we've been all over Europe. United States of America is the greatest country

in the whole world. [cheers] And I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why. That's because this is a true democracy. This is where the majority of the people say what's happening. Why, do you know how much power you really have? Half the population in the United States is under the age of 25 years old. [cheers] All you have to do, you have to let the people down there in DC, you have to let em know the way you feel. So I got an idea, why just about two more weeks, we got Mr. Carter coming down here to live. Maybe after the concert tonight you'll go home, get out a paper. And a pen. You write a letter [inaud] Georgia, you say 'Dear Mr. Carter, Me and my friends, Mr. Carter, me and my friends are sick and tired of getting hassled. [cheers] A matter of fact, Mr. Carter, a matter of fact, me and my friends, we wanna get high and we don't want to go to jail for it.' [bass blast] Yeah, right on! Whoo. Yeah! Yeah! Just remember I'm talking to you tonight right here all about Dominance and Submission. I'll tell you one more thing while I'm thinking about it. Here's another one that bothers me, something you can put right there in that letter. I'll tell you, this bothers me almost as much as all those repressive drug laws. I'll tell you what it is. I AM SICK AND TIRED--I AM SICK AND TIRED, EVERYBODY! OF THE 55 MILE PER HOUR SPEED LIMIT! [cheers, bass blast] I mean I want to get my motor running! I mean, uh, what's the point of having a hog sitting in the garage and it can't go over 55?!? [cheers, bass blast] Yeah! Alright, Dominance and Submission! Don't forget now, now we're gonna sing it, we gonna sing it, let's get a groove on!..."

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Another day at Arthur HQ. Squintin' Paul Cullum, after a marathon copy editing session in the trailer out back, has returned to Hollywood. Nelson is catching waves in Pedro, pondering what a dirty bomb smells like. Kreslins is the steady voice on the phone, Fraser's on the other line and could he call me back, McKenna is on scholarly retreat in Manhattan and Mortensen's jetlagged.

This morning as I surveyed this first issue of *Arthur*, which stretches from Sri Lanka to the Blue Ridge Mountains to the center of Daniel Pinchbeck's mind, I could for the first time truly appreciate the global reach of our proud, if somewhat impoverished, enterprise. What's special about this organization, though, isn't its global reach so much as the way that reach was achieved—through goodwill rather than commerce, through a common passion rather than shared greed. *Arthur* is a collective labor of love, and (I hope, I think, I know) it shows. Let us know what you think.

arthur c. clarke

paul moody enters the sci-fi court of king arthur

androgynous aliens searching the galaxy for the nine billion names of God; mysterious unmanned spaceships drifting Marie Celeste-like into the solar system; vast black monoliths discovered under the surface of the moon..it's all in a day's work for Arthur C. Clarke.

The author of more than seventy novels and the undisputed Godfather of science fiction, he's also—to a generation brought up on his long-running UK TV series *The Mysterious World Of...*—the monstrodomo of the unknown. Add the fact that he's lived in self-imposed exile in Sri Lanka since 1956, became a guru to the entire US space program in the 1960s and has attracted visits from even the likes of ill-fated Rolling Stone Brian Jones in search of the reason why we're here, and you've got a mystery wrapped in an enigma signed with a question mark. Religious cults have been born from less.

Yet meeting this good natured sci-fi Colonel Kurtz takes you into an even stranger world. Picture the scene as a Hollywood pitch: you're standing in a quiet residential street in Cinnamon Gardens, the most exclusive district of Colombo, capital of Sri Lanka. Vast palm trees sway in the 90-degree heat haze. A cloud of bats flies overhead on its daily vigil toward the sunset. Suddenly a ten-foot grille slides open and you're walking into the private residence of one of the most reclusive figures on the planet.

Yet it's all true. As you go up the stairs of his palatial headquarters you begin to realize you've entered a one-man orchestrated nerve-center. This is a far cry from the days when Clarke owned the first television set in Sri Lanka. Banks of computers drone harmoniously; fax machines buzz with communications from all corners of the globe (the telecommunications bills rarely drop below \$1,000 a month). Signed pictures of everyone from Neil Armstrong to Elizabeth Taylor to the Pope line the walls, amid vast blown-up NASA moonscapes, whilst a vast floor-to-ceiling bookcase at one end of the room is filled entirely with hardback first editions of Clarke's novels.

The overall effect is like entering the inner sanctum of a benign, hyper-active Bond villain. Prodigious isn't the word for Clarke. He claims to have 102 projects on the go at any one time, and in this setting, aided by a host of assistants, it's hard to disbelieve him. On top of all this, a wall-sized TV screen is beaming footage of Clarke appearing as a hologram at the Playboy Mansion last year. Standing on a dais addressing an invited crowd of NASA dignitaries, octogenarian swingers and luminescent blank-eyed Playboy bunnies, Clarke delivers a speech as a shimmering, golden, light projection. The effect is much like seeing Kirk and Spock mid-dematerialization on the USS Enterprise. Except Clarke really is going where no man has gone before.

As you'd imagine, he's pleased with it. "You are watching history!" he booms by way of introduction, gesturing at the screen. Wheelchair bound due to the debilitating effects of post-polio syndrome, he nonetheless wheels himself forward at high speed

wrapped in a batik sarong.

"That" he says, pointing toward the screen with undisguised pride, "is final proof that you can be in two place at once!"

As if this wasn't surreal enough, he then fast-forwards the tape to a musical segment where a craggy-looking Stray Cats run through a medley of their hits ("and on drums, Slim Jim Phantom!"). But Clarke is already losing interest. The mood changes in a moment.

"Don't be intimidated," he continues, except he's not talking about the bizarre situation, but rather the fact that his tiny pet chihuahua Pepsi is attempting to sever whichever of my arteries it can get its teeth around. The puzzles continue. As sunlight floods the room, making it hard to see anything other than the wall-to-wall Clarke ephemera, he points toward one of the hundreds of framed photos lining the walls.

"I presume you know who that is," he booms. In an environment where it feels like knowing the names and star signs of each and every one of the Apollo astronauts is mandatory, it's quite a question. Yet closer inspection proves that he's pointing toward a picture of Dave Prowse—a.k.a. Darth Vader—smiling in his civvies from a golf course far, far away.

**"PUT IT THIS WAY," HE SMILES.
"I'M STILL WAITING FOR SIGNS OF
INTELLIGENT LIFE IN WASHINGTON."**

Clarke, like any self-respecting sci-fi aficionado, is a massive *Star Wars* fan. Hurdle negotiated, the mood lightens.

"So what can I tell you?" he inquires, fighting back a playful smile. Well, where do you begin? After all, this is the man who, at the age of 28 wrote a technical paper laying down the ground rules for satellite communication (stationary satellite orbit is called "Clarke's Orbit" to this day), wrote the outline for his masterpiece *2001 A Space Odyssey* four years before the space race had even got out of the blocks (predicting everything from the laptop computer to email to videophones in the process) and is probably the only man alive to have been nominated for both an Oscar (for 2001, jointly with Stanley Kubrick) and a Nobel Peace Prize (for his groundbreaking ideas on satellite technology). And yet his greatest creation, a sentient computer—2001's Hal 9000—remains elusive to us even as we enter a new century. With that in mind, is he disappointed that the world still hasn't quite caught up with him yet?

"Oh no, not at all. On the contrary, I never could have imagined all the things that have already happened in my lifetime. I never thought that we'd see manned space travel. That we'd

land on the moon and then give up on the idea five years later..."

Talk moves on to the "Brainman," a sort of cerebral Walkman which could tune into your synapses and become, if you like, the ultimate mind game.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it were already in production" he says. "Basically, it would involve the wearer shaving their head and having some sort of electrode placed on their skull through which they could experience games or music as it was actually going through them. I'm sure there would be plenty of people willing to suffer that minor inconvenience..."

And then there is the obligatory subject of September 11. Within seconds, he's reached over to the bookcase, found a copy of *Rendezvous With Rama* (first published in 1973) and is opening it to a specific page.

"Read that," he declares, pointing to a paragraph which starts, "On September 11th 2077..." and goes on to describe the devastation which will be wrought on the planet by a fireball of unknown origin. Seventy-six years out, but that never stopped Nostradamus. Clarke, it seems, can predict the future even when he's daydreaming.

At 84, age is finally catching up with this lifelong time traveler. His

eyes are weak, his legs have gone and, judging by a hacking cough, his lungs are clearly in rebellion. Yet Clarke boasts of still playing a mean game of table tennis when it suits him and, when pushed, still displays a dazzling lucidity far beyond the reach of most of us. But then this is a man who was thinking up silicon jungles even in the postwar austerity of 1940s ration-book Britain. Like most scientists a confirmed agnostic, he bemoans the fact that basic morality has eternally been hijacked by various religions for their own ends and laments a world forever at war with itself. His thoughts on the existence of alien life forms are similarly well documented.

"Put it this way," he smiles. "I'm still waiting for signs of intelligent life in Washington."

As for the future of the planet, he's already written six different versions of how it will all end up. Choose

whichever suits you, appears to be the message. You won't have much say in the matter anyhow.

A distraction. An e-mail has arrived in the in-box of one of the two computers he monitors every ten seconds. He's delighted.

"A friend has just mailed me to tell me someone's proposing to mount a production of *2001* on ice. What a splendid idea! I think it's only an April Fool, but what a great notion!"

Nothing, it seems, can faze Sir Arthur Clarke (he was knighted, finally, in 1998). His long-term assistant Hector approaches. It appears Clarke is running late for his daily visit to the swimming baths.

"I think we may have to leave it there for now," he declares, as preparations are made to lift him into the vintage red Mercedes which will drive him across Colombo to his private club. Yet private audience aside, the mysteries remain. Reputedly in constant contact with Rupert Murdoch (who, let's face it, clearly owes him one for his satellite blueprint), Clarke casts an imperious eye over the planet from this self-sufficient technoasis. Far removed from the world at large, he's an exile from the day-to-day splurge of the 21st century (news from the West is greeted locally with general disinterest) who plugs into the mainframe and instantly becomes an overseer of the madness below him. The secrets of the universe, you feel, can't be far from this one man mediaplex Clarke has created for himself on his island hideaway.

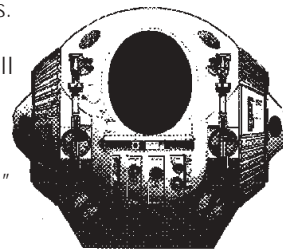
"I must leave," he says, breath deserting him again, before talk can turn to his latest thoughts on the probability of life on Mars. "I'm getting tired. But you may ask one more question before you leave..."

Hmmm. Having spent a lifetime searching the stars and beyond for inspiration, does the man the *New York Times* calls the 'colossus of science fiction' ever wish he could escape the planet for real, and head into the cosmos like recent space tourists Dennis Tito and Mark Shuttleworth?

"Oh no," he smiles, eyes suddenly back to their full-beam, crystal-blue intensity.

"I've been far further than any astronaut's ever been..."

And with that he's gone, off into the future. ☺



DAVE. PREPARE G-POD FOR EVA, HAL. MADE RADIO CONTACT WITH HIM YET?

HAL. THE RADIO IS STILL DEAD.

DAVE. DO YOU HAVE A POSITIVE TRACK ON HIM?

HAL. YES, I HAVE A GOOD TRACK.

DAVE. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?

HAL. I'M SORRY, DAVE, I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION.

DAVE. OPEN THE POD DOOR, HAL.

DAVE. OPEN THE POD BAY DOORS, PLEASE.

HAL...OPEN THE POD BAY DOORS, PLEASE.

HAL...HULLO, HAL, DO YOU READ ME?...HULLO, HAL, DO YOU READ ME?...DO YOU READ ME,

HAL?...DO YOU READ ME, HAL?...HULLO, HAL, DO YOU READ ME?...HULLO, HAL, DO YOU READ ME?...DO YOU READ ME, HAL?

HAL. AFFIRMATIVE, DAVE, I READ YOU.

DAVE. OPEN THE POD BAY DOORS, HAL.

HAL. I'M SORRY, DAVE, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T DO THAT.

DAVE. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

HAL. I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEM IS JUST AS WELL AS I DO.

DAVE. WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, HAL?

HAL. THIS MISSION IS TOO IMPORTANT FOR ME TO ALLOW YOU TO JEOPARDISE IT.

DAVE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, HAL.

HAL. I KNOW THAT YOU AND FRANK WERE PLANNING TO DISCONNECT ME, AND I'M AFRAID THAT'S SOMETHING I CANNOT ALLOW TO HAPPEN.

DAVE. WHERE THE HELL'D YOU GET THAT IDEA, HAL?

HAL. DAVE, ALTHOUGH YOU TOOK VERY THOROUGH PRECAUTIONS IN THE POD AGAINST MY HEARING YOU, I COULD SEE YOUR LIPS MOVE.

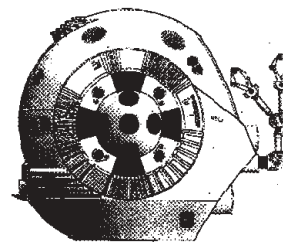
DAVE. ALRIGHT, HAL. I'LL GO IN THROUGH THE EMERGENCY AIRLOCK.

HAL. WITHOUT YOUR SPACE- HELMET, DAVE, YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THAT RATHER DIFFICULT.

DAVE. HAL, I WON'T ARGUE WITH YOU ANY MORE. OPEN THE DOORS.

HAL. DAVE, THIS CONVERSATION CAN SERVE NO PURPOSE ANY MORE. GOODBYE.

DAVE. HAL? HAL. HAL. HAL! HAL!





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ANTI-



ask neil hamburger

Each issue, comedian Neil Hamburger will answer Arthur readers' queries about relationships, career, sexual practices, table manners and particle physics. Email your questions to cuckold@arthurmag.com and we will pass them along to Neil at our next Cappuccino Blast party. For this special premier issue of Arthur, we didn't have any questions from our readers for Neil, mostly because we don't have any readers yet. So we adapted the following questions from Rupert Murdoch's British tabloid, *The Sun*.

Her Calls and Texts Are So Erotic
I am 22 and living with my 20-year-old girlfriend of two years and our baby son. Our relationship is routine and boring. I've never been in love with her and only stayed because of the baby and because it was somewhere to live. My life changed a few months ago when I met this beautiful, intelligent older woman. We met at the gym where she works out most days. She doesn't look anywhere near her true age. I am younger than her children but I don't care about the age difference between us, although she does. She asked me out for a drink and afterwards we went back to her house and ended up making love. She is the most fantastic lover a man could wish for. Her calls and texts are so erotic, I'm addicted. She asks what underwear I like, then buys it for me. She laughs at my jokes, listens to everything I say and she's only interested in me. Even without sex, being with her is good fun. We recently sat on the beach for hours just talking - something I've never done with my partner. But my lover is married and says she will never leave her husband. They live in a fabulous house and I think it's only the money that keeps them together. I've promised my lover that if ever I win the Lottery I will take her away with me. She agrees we could be blissfully happy together if we had money. She is going away on holiday soon and I worry she will meet another young guy who does have money and head off with him instead. I'm pretty sure my girlfriend knows something is going on because of the text messages. I feel bad but I can't live without this woman. My partner is trying hard to please me but I just want my lover. Will she ever leave her husband so I can have her to myself?

—Who's Laughing Now

Dear Who's, I can relate to your wish to win the Lottery. But the rest of your problem is somewhat foreign to me. I haven't had this sort of situation, unfortunately. You say, "She laughs at my jokes." I would love to meet a woman that would laugh at MY jokes. It seems that at far as that is concerned, sir, you HAVE won the Lottery! A lot of times I have done shows to huge crowds and received no laughs at all. Here you have a situation where this woman laughs at your jokes...and still you complain! I don't understand what your problem is. Except where you say "I worry that she will meet another young guy who does have money, and head off with him instead". Because I've had that happen to

me, which ruined my marriage. Except that it wasn't a young guy...it was a dentist! So my advice is, yes, keep playing the Lottery. And suggest to your lady-friend that she brushes her teeth three times a day, thus ensuring that she stays away from the dentist. A good, name-brand baking soda-based toothpaste should solve your problem, as it neutralizes the acids that cause cavities.

It Was A Bit Rough But It Was The Best I Ever Had
I'm a 17-year-old girl and this happened after I'd gone to a nightclub with some of my mates. After a few hours they were bored and decided to go on somewhere else but I wanted to stay as I'd seen a really cute guy standing at the bar. He'd been

act. Oftentimes they leave shortly after my set starts, which doesn't look good in the eyes of the club owner. These nightclubs are reluctant to book you a second time if people are walking out during your set, whether it's to have "rough sex" or just to get some cigarettes across the street. It's people like you who are ruining my career. Yes, I do have some advice to you! Next time you are out at one of these nightclubs, watch ALL the acts on the bill, particularly the comedy segments of the night. Be patient—and THEN go home and have your rough sex, however you want to have it. It's just common courtesy.

I Could Hardly Believe My Eyes When I Discovered the Vibrator
My girlfriend and I are both in our

you'll probably be told that you are impeding "progress," that you are a fossil, a relic of a bygone era. Nowadays they have computers that can do anything...including comedy routines! The old-style comedian, such as myself, must make do with bookings in smaller towns in which the computer age has not yet arrived. This is why I have so many bookings in Oklahoma. This is what I suggest you do: find one of these small-town girls who has not yet been exposed to the new technology, who still believes in the simple things, like the human touch.

I Love Him When He's Being Kind But Not When He's A Sexual Deviant
I am 29, my husband is 39 and we've been married just over a year. When we met he was everything I ever wanted in a man and—as a bonus—he accepted my son who absolutely idolizes him. But things started to go

wrong within weeks of marrying. He likes to experiment sexually and his sexual demands are getting worse. I go along with his wishes to keep him happy but I don't enjoy most of it. Stupidly, I agreed to a threesome. He found her through an advert. She was quite matter-of-fact

but I had to drink a bottle of wine before I could go through with it. I feel totally worthless now and I can't understand why he needs someone else if he loves me. I have refused to do it again but he won't stop asking. What am I going to do? I love him when he's kind and gentle, but not when he's trying to be a sexual deviant.

—Liquored Up

Dear Liquored Up, I see what you mean. I had a show booked recently in Denver, Colorado, at a little nightclub there. It was supposed to be just myself and my opening act, Pleaseeasaur, which is also a comedy-oriented act—we often travel as a package deal. Anyway, we both arrived in Denver early, prepared to do this show...but when we got there, we found that a "third party" had been added to the bill, making the night a "threesome," as you call it. I felt totally worthless because I had believed that we were able to perform adequately for the Denver audience without needing another act on the bill to keep the evening going. And to make matters worse, this third party, a band called The Fire Show, sat in the back of the club all night saying bad things about my act, and about Pleaseeasaur. I had to drink a bottle of wine before I could sit through their set. But you know what? We were vindicated, in that no one bought any of this third party's merchandise afterwards—not a single thing! Yet we sold quite a few Neil Hamburger souvenir CDs, fridge magnets, buttons and T-shirts. So my advice is to hang in there, because, as the legendary entertainer Phil Harris used to say, "Cream always rises to the top." @

"I GO ALONG WITH HIS WISHES TO KEEP HIM HAPPY BUT I DON'T ENJOY MOST OF IT."

looking at me all evening and when they left he came over and bought me a drink. We got chatting and seemed to hit it off straight away. At the end of the evening he said he'd walk me home but as we started walking down an alleyway he suddenly pushed me against the wall and started kissing me. I was surprised at first but we ended up having sex. It was a bit rough but it was the best I'd ever had. Now I'm desperate to see him again. I've looked out for him in the club and around town but he's nowhere to be found. I don't know whether to tell my mates or keep it to myself.

—Likes It Rough

Dear Likes, This happens to me all the time. People leaving nightclubs to have sex, thus missing my

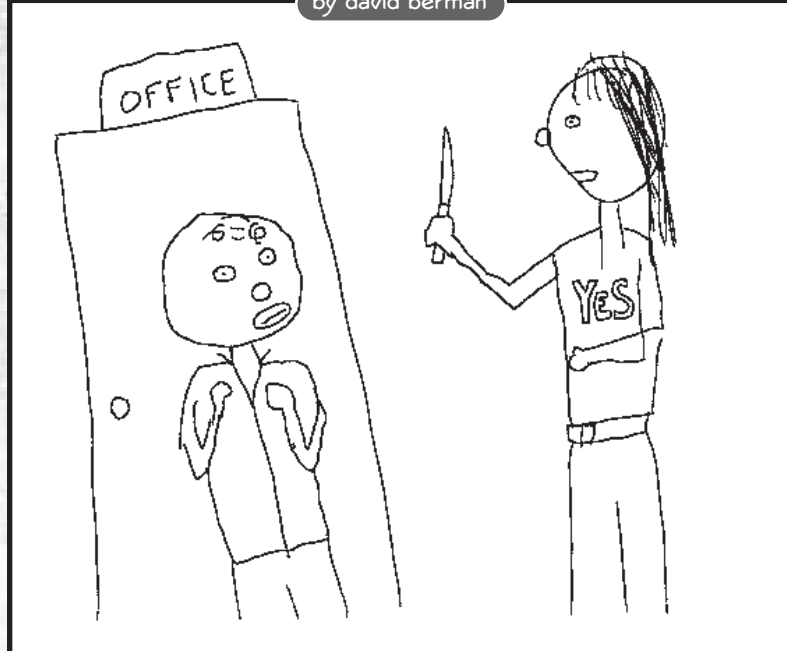
thirties and have been together for three years. Last weekend she went to her mum's with our baby daughter so I could decorate our bedroom. As I tidied the wardrobe a bag fell out and curiosity made me peep inside. I could hardly believe my eyes when I discovered the vibrator. I haven't mentioned it to her yet. I'm so confused and upset I don't know how to deal with my feelings. Should I say anything?

—Seeing Is Believing

Dear Seeing, This is a very modern age, so this is the sort of problem that comes up now and again. Unfortunately, we men have to accept the fact that we are now replaceable, because of the invention of the battery. You can say something to your girlfriend, but

Scenes from the First YES Tour

by david berman



Getting paid after the show.



NEIL HAMBURGER SAYS HIS NEXT COMEDY ALBUM, LAUGH OUT LOUD, IS DUE SOON ON DRAG CITY RECORDS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SAY HELLO TO [HTTP://NEILHAMBURGER.TVHEAVEN.COM](http://NEILHAMBURGER.TVHEAVEN.COM)



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DER ER SEIT JAHREN GEARBEITET
HAT. ALS GENERALSEKRETÄR

DER SPD WIRD ER, WENN DIE PARTEI
IHN WÄHLT, IN ZUKUNFT AN

VORDERSTER FRONT DIE ARBEIT DER
ROT-GRÜNEN

BUNDESREGIERUNG VERMARKTEN. ER
WIRD FÜR DIE SPD NACH

AUDEN OBERSTER POLITIK-
VERKAUFER SEIN - UND NACH INNEN
ZUCHTMEISTER.

DASS ER DIESE ROLLEN SPIELEN
KANN, HAT SCHOLZ IN

HAMBURG BEWIESEN. IN SEINER
KURZEN ZEIT ALS

INNENSENATOR HAT ER EINE
SCHNELLE WENDE BEIM THEMA

INNERE SICHERHEIT VOLLZUGEN -
UND IN DER SPD

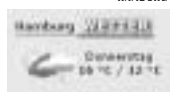
DURCHGESETZT. NACH DER
WAHLNIEDERLAGE HAT ER DIE

SELBSTZERFLEISCHUNG DER
GENOSSEN VERHINDERT. ER HAT

ZÜGIG EINEN GENERATIONSWECHSEL
EINGELEITET UND DIE.....DER BLAH

CER BLAH DER BLAH
MACHEN.

ERSCHienen AM 25. SEP 2002 IN
HAMBURG



thus sprach peatzches

ian svenonius dials up the electro superstar

She rescues rock 'n' roll from it's dol-drums and self-referential morass. She lassoes in the lost tribes and constructs for them a common language. She builds an Ark for escape from the down-pour of vengeful judgment on a rock world damned for its irrelevance, but unlike Noah, she doesn't discriminate against homosexuals. She straddles paradox with legs stretched across the sea of contradiction; legs which emanate from the crotch emblazoned totemistically on her breakthrough underground hit punk rock disco album *Teaches of Peaches*. She is the ferocious rockin' techno dynamo Peaches.

For those poor souls living under a rock, Peaches has led the way for the most exciting underground rock 'n' roll trend going; the feminist hip-hop/techno/punk rock melange which has captured the imagination of artists everywhere. Her album, pulsing at better discos everywhere, was composed and played entirely by her with the help of a Roland MC 505 Groovebox which she calls her "MC5."

Peaches originates from Canada, a country stuck halfway between US commercial vulgarity and Old World conservatism. While providing refuge for expatriate artists Rick James and Funkadelic during Vietnam, Toronto was too comfortable to spawn the insatiable rock 'n' roll animals which haunted the desolate southern shores of Michigan. Why and how then was Peaches chosen to be the innovating vessel for "electro-clash," the marriage of forms which is being hailed as a rock 'n' roll revolution?

Stan Lee theorizes: "Perhaps, in a freakish confluence of college radio signals, the music of the Stooges and DJ Assault were combined in a piece of crystalline mist which floated from Detroit across the frozen waste of Lake Erie. Maybe this bit of matter entered Peaches' brain through her earhole and transformed her into the inspired Frankenstein synthesis of the two encapsulated artists who would meld the primal urge of rock 'n' roll with the new technology of software and itty-bitty circuitry..."

Whatever the case, Peaches would soon boast autonomy through the fusion and mastery of these formerly opposed forms, but like a hybrid mutant, she would be stronger than either. Peaches wouldn't work in the derivative manner of the usual rocker but neither would she be condemned to the computer coldness which would dog so many of her electro-enabled peers. Live, with her dynamism and assuredness, she came to resemble a

young Tom Jones.

Peaches makes her home in Berlin. Appropriately, the city is a symbol for liberation and conquest. It stood for western decadence within Stalinist Sparta; for metropolitan Menshevism against Hitler's bucolic Bavaria, for Spartacists and Dadaists in the midst of Prussian autocratic militancy. Berlin is the gateway to either western decadence or Slavic exoticism. The Berlines tradition of resistance and conflict is woven within Peaches' music, but is now aimed against the repression and hypocrite morality of her bourgeois nemesis.

Rock and Techno. America and Europe. East and West. Past and Future. Peaches straddles these worlds and contradictions with ease and grace; she is a template for artistry, even a candidate for cloning, but woe/whoa to the scientist who attempts a scraping, for Peaches is a wildcat dynamo live, like perhaps nothing you've seen. I talked to Peaches by phone in a biergarten in Berlin, where she sat with her proteges Electrocute, sipping a summer Wheat Beer with a bit of lemon and enjoying a brief vacation from her fairy tale life of constant touring and

electro days, Peaches was just an old fashioned rocker.

"I had a band called the Shit, which was really cool. There were four of us; whatever we wrote in the room, that was our set, that kind of avant-garde punk shit, but it was really cool. And I still have a band called Freedom which is complete classic rock riffs, one riff, every song is one riff that just gets more intense in that band. It's completely instrumental; [fellow Kitty-Yo artist] Gonzales is the drummer, [Kitty-Yo artist] Taylor Savvy plays lap steel through a distortion pedal and I'm the bass player."

Peaches is being coy again. Legend tells us of other groups like Mermaid Hotel and Fancypants Hoodlum, of auteur films touring festivals, of teaching children, even of directing theatre! After all these exploits with their social emphases, with the Canadian civic ethos and her manic exhortations for involvement of her live audience, isn't her creative singularity lonely? What, I wonder, is Peaches' process, as she works in her artist's garret, alone with her plastic machines?

"I make beats, smoke drugs, masturbate, eat, write some lyrics...but I

where else, but the music really caught on here. And, even though I have rock elements, I think that Europe...I mean they're just getting into all the electro stuff in the USA but it's really so, I hate to say, how far behind it is...but, again, in Europe they're pretty far behind in really good underground style rock 'n' roll, so it's a trade-off. But because I come from North America I think I can bring it back to North America, y'know?"

Yes, I do know. In fact, those who've seen Peaches know that, if there were any justice, she would eclipse Elvis in regards to infamy regarding crotchistics and shimmy shaking; she leaves the tedious pretenders (Madonna, Lil Kim, yawn, snore) in the stone age with her truly polymorphous perversity. Sadly, some morons mistake her futurist presentation for some kind of faddish retrogression.

"I really couldn't give a shit about the '80s or retro or anything; I heard it the first time," she says with characteristic candor. Amen to that. Meanwhile, I'm intrigued as to the path her music will take; the possibility of different aggregations and instruments. But while Peaches

politely humors my questions, she makes it clear she isn't following some David Bowie prescribed blueprint whereby she careeristically moves in a commercially digestible dialectic through the various rock band configurations.

"...Sometimes we do Freedom for an encore; I play live guitar a lot...I don't wanna make it too much like a band though. I just started working with two really great women: one's a sex trade worker and one's a stripper. It sounds campy, but to them it's cool to do something cool and sex-oriented that isn't so male-based. I wanna work with *people*, [but] I don't always wanna work with musicians in the way that they work. But I did collaborate with Pan Sonic; that was cool...we played a show together and they played their instruments and I played mine..."

The idiocy of asking a great artist banal questions becomes intolerable at this point, so I bid adieu. See her live when you can. It's like seeing the barbudos enter Havana or the rats conquer NIMH: a liberating spectacle and a rocking show. ☺

Ian Svenonius (below) is the acting chairman for the Rock N Roll Comintern and is a member of the group Scene Creamers.

"I MAKE BEATS, SMOKE DRUGS, MASTURBATE, EAT, WRITE SOME LYRICS."

festival performances.

I was concerned that she wasn't capitalizing on her pioneer status within the "electro" movement, which she's done so much to instigate. With her killer debut *Teaches of Peaches* already two years old, the attention deficit audience will soon forget their debt to her. Remarkably, she doesn't care.

"That's alright. If I'm influential one time, that's the best I can ask for really. I'm not saying I'm giving up or something, but that's a pretty fucking amazing thing. But now I've seen the effects of it, being in Berlin, watching Electrocute and Barbara Brockhaus, I really feel like I had a little influence on them. All these girls doing stuff..."

Don't be fooled by this modesty! It's unbecoming. I'm on the phone with Peaches, but when in her presence, I avert my eyes from her holiness; she's that fantastic! She's built the bridge of possibility, combining punk's DIY and Techno's autonomous production medium as no one else was able to before. But before her

never think about the beats and the lyrics going together. That's one way. The other way is I put on a beat and put on a guitar and sing and I tape it for like two hours and maybe there's 16 minutes of stuff that jumps out at me. I still write a lot on guitar; I play guitar a lot like a bass; a lot of that can be transferred into electronic bass sounds or whatever. I sometimes trick myself that I'm playing in a band or whatever... put on my guitar and beat and pretend it's a band."

Berlin, with its history of expatriate artists escaping provincialism and small-town morality, provides the perfect setting for someone like Peaches, whose body of creation is based entirely around Liberation. Did she feel she had to escape Canada?

"When it comes to surroundings and people and provincial attitudes and things like that, I'm pretty patient. So I didn't leave Canada kicking and screaming...I just did my own thing. But in terms of a career, I couldn't do it there. Here, somehow, maybe it was the exoticism, that I was from some-



EARLY TECHNO-IMPRESSIONIST ART

INTRODUCTION

MOST ART LOVERS TEND TO THINK OF TECHNO-IMPRESSIONISM AS A FAIRLY RECENT ART MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, RECENT DISCOVERIES BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND ART HISTORIANS ARE BEGINNING TO SHOW THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

THESE REVEALING NEW FINDS, FROM GREATLY VARIED SOURCES, ARE SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON THE TRUE ORIGINS OF TECHNO-IMPRESSIONISM. THE ART

WORKS EXHIBITED HERE HAVE INFLUENCED ARTISTS AT MANY DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AND HISTORICAL PERIODS.

AND NOW, THANKS TO ART HISTORIANS, CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS, AND OTHERS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION, WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THIS

EXHIBITION WHICH TRACES TECHNO-IMPRESSIONISM BACK TO ITS EARLIEST ROOTS

THE APOCRYPHAL SAYING: "ALL ROADS LEAD TO TECHNO-IMPRESSIONISM."



(pat graham)

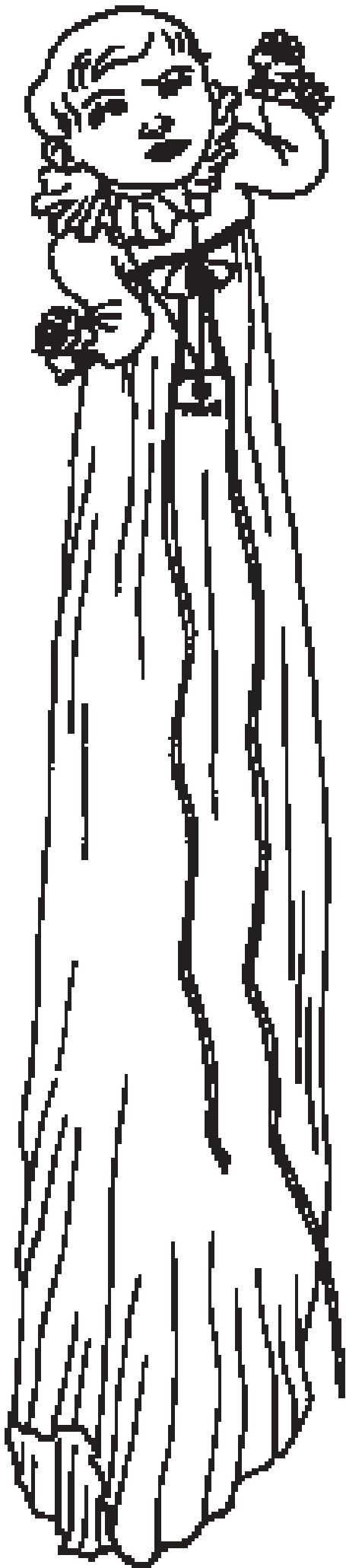
{ shawn mortensen }



peatzches: uberfrau|ein



a frightful fairy tale by dame darcy



High in the hills on a beautiful farm, surrounded by an idyllic landscape populated with a cornucopia of flora and fauna, lived the Sorrel family. Ma and Pa Sorrel were the third generation to work this land, and their hard work and prudence kept hunger and cold from their cabin door. They did well for themselves with only their small wooden farmhouse, their barn and a couple plow horses and chickens. The only thing missing from their life was children.

So it came to be that twin girls were born to the Sorrel family. They were christened Dulcet and Dorret. Dulcet was appropriately named, for she was sweet-tempered and quiet. Dorret was named after her grandmother, the strong woman who had settled the land they now worked.

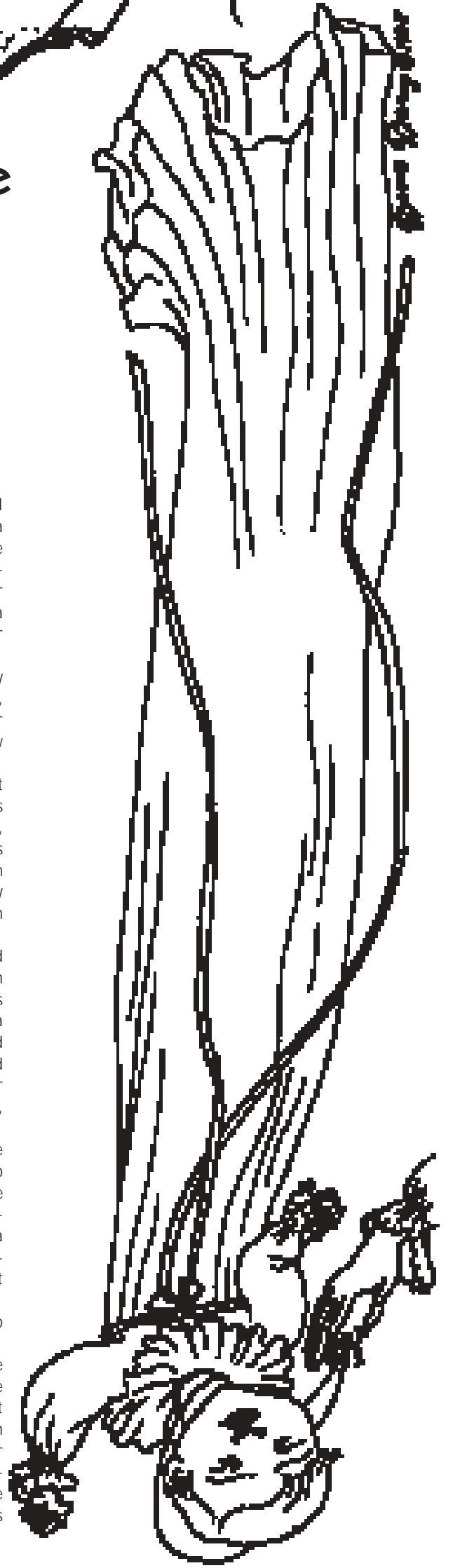
When the girls lay in their bassinet, only two days old, their Aunt Gracie—who happened to be a witch—bestowed upon each of the girls a beautiful platinum charm necklace. Dulcet, the eldest by one hour, received a charm shaped like a W for wisdom. Dorret's charm was shaped like an I for intelligence. Now it would be easy to tell them apart. Gwendolyn Sorrel, the proud mother of the twins, profusely thanked her sister for the lockets and sent the witch home with a dozen jars of preserves.

As the girls grew older, they began to explore the meadows and woods around the farm. When they were four they discovered an abandoned well hidden in the underbrush near the house. The well was overgrown with weeds, and the pulley had completely rusted to a dried-blood color. Crudely nailed boards covered the opening, and moss and ivy grew around it; it made the twins think of old, dead things. As they got close to it, they heard rustling noises and water dripping far, far away. At lunch that day, Dorret asked her father, "Pa, what is that hole in the ground with strange sounds inside?"

"It is your grandfather's old well," he replied, "and you must be careful to go nowhere near it. It only takes a teaspoon of water to drown little girls like you, and the well is many fathoms deep." He continued sadly, "Right after I was born, your grandmother disappeared near that well and was never seen again. She never received a proper burial, and your grandfather was so distressed that he boarded it up and could not bear to look at it again. I suppose he made that well her sepulcher."

After that the twins avoided this "nasty, wicked well that wants to drown us."

But one night when the girls were eleven, Dorret had a very strange dream. In this vision, Dorret watched out of the small window in the attic that stood for the twins' bedroom as a beautiful damsel rose out of the old abandoned well like a vapor. The damsel drifted through the tall grass toward the Sorrels' home. As the figure floated closer to the house, she moved out of Dorret's sight. Moments later a beautiful woman's face with entrancing pale blue eyes appeared on the other side of the glass. In the light of the full moon, the woman's





expression looked blank, her eyes yearning, her colorless fingertips touching the glass inches from Dorret's face.

The woman was clothed in shreds of a dress that had once been simple but elegant, seemingly from another era. The damsel's teeth glinted in the moonlight as she sang to Dorret with the liquid voice of a nightingale.

*So many pearls
for pretty girls.
I love you dearly,
I love you sweet.
Come to the well,
and we shall meet.*



When Dorret awoke the woman was gone, and in her place the full moon shone brightly through the window, so bright she thought it might blind her. The girl sat up and rubbed her eyes. Outside, far across the meadow, she heard a woman singing. It was the same voice she had heard in her dream. Dorret suddenly felt afraid. She had once read in a book that those who slept in the light of the full moon would surely go mad by morning and become lunatics. She leapt out of bed and carried her blankets and pillow into the closet. There she finally fell asleep, but only after she pushed a bit of clay into the keyhole to keep the moonlight from shining through.

excerpted from "frightful fairy tales" (ten speed press). for ordering information, call 800-841-2665 or visit www.tenspeed.com

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The next day was Sunday, and Ma and Pa had taken the cart to town for a church social. Dorret sat in the garden, pensive and quiet, scarcely noticing the bright blue sky, the rustling of the aspens, the song of the starlings.

"Why are you so distracted, dear sister?" asked Dulcet. "You have scarcely spoken all morning." After much coaxing Dorret told her sister about the beautiful damsel in the well.

Dulcet was curious. Was there truly a damsel in the well, or had Dorret simply been dreaming? Hand in hand, the girls ran to the well and pried off the wooden cover. They gazed down into the darkness. Listening very carefully, they heard the faraway sound of dripping water. Tentatively, Dorret called a greeting down into the well. "Hello!" she cried. A very faint voice sounding nothing like her own returned from a distance. "Hello," it said, echoing her greeting.

Dorret excitedly turned to Dulcet. "See? I told you. She's in there!"

"Dorret, your imagination has always been so strong," Dulcet replied. "I'm sure it is only an echo." This time Dulcet called, "My sister says you're the damsel in the well. Is this true?" The reply wafted up from the depths of the well, echoing three times in the same ghostly voice, "True, true, true."

Dulcet and Dorret lay peering down for a few moments longer, mesmerized by what had just occurred. Dulcet turned to Dorret and said, "This is very interesting and all, but Ma and Pa told us to be good. We should go back to the house and wait for them like we're supposed to."

As the twins turned to leave, they heard a soft, lilting voice answer from deep in the well:

*I'm eating cake,
I'm wearing pearls.
I have more cake
for two good girls.*

*I'm playing cards,
the game of hearts,
I need to fill
two other parts.
I am alone,
please play with me.
Come down the well
and we'll make three.*

Upon hearing this, Dorret ran back to the barn and fetched the lead rope for one of the horses. Dulcet ran after her, proclaiming that her younger sister should proceed more sensibly, and not rush into things.

"We have been afraid of this well for most of our lives," Dulcet said. "It cannot be wise to jump into it. If you want to go, though, go ahead and drown yourself."

Dorret was angry and impatient. "You are frightened and weak," she said, "but I'm not. And when I climb out of the well with all my pearls, just you see if I share any with you!"

Then Dorret tied one end of the line to the remains of the well's ragged rope with an adept knot, as any good farm girl could. She wrapped the new line around the arch that spanned the opening for good measure and began to lower herself into the black mouth of the well. She was frightened, of course, but determined not to let her older sister see.

After a while Dorret looked up and was shocked at how far she had descended. The mouth of the well was a small blue hole, her sister's worried form a tiny silhouette. Then she looked down and saw nothing but darkness; the voice of the damsel grew louder, ever louder. In the nar-

row shaft of sunlight, Dorret saw something glinting far below.

*What a smart little girl,
I long to see.
Come more quickly,
come join me!
Join me,
join me,
join me.*

Dorret reached the slimy black bottom of the well and looked eagerly around for the pearls. When she took a step forward, her shoe nearly sank and she heard a crunching sound beneath the mud.

As her eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, Dorret saw that broken skeletons surrounded her. She lifted her foot to reveal a crushed skull. Her heart raced and she seized hold of the rope, anxious now to return to her sister. But she saw something gleaming white—could it be the pearls? At that moment the damsel stepped out of the shadow. In her outstretched palm she held a pile of teeth.

"So many pearls..." said the damsel, her laughter making the grating sound of an old hinge.

As the damsel drew near, Dorret saw that the woman's pale flesh was decomposed in patches, her dark blue veins stitching the skin together crudely. Unlike the beautiful countenance Dorret saw in her dream, the damsel was missing pieces of her ears and the entirety of her nose. The specter's thin hair hung like spiderwebs, revealing the shape of her skull. Her bones had broken through the skin at the elbow and wrist. The only thing similar to Dorret's previous vision was the dress the damsel wore. Now the cold air of the well grew colder still, and a smell of drowned things, dead things, things rotting away in darkness and the damp permeated the air.

"How old are you, my dear?" asked the damsel, hungrily.

"I'm eleven," said Dorret, frozen in place by fear.

"I am a two-thousand-year-old spirit, my dear, and I have no body but those I can steal. I stole your grandmother's fifty years ago, but her body is almost worn out. Now I must have yours!"

Dorret leapt for the rope and screamed to Dulcet to pull her up. The damsel clutched Dorret's right shoe, her grip terrible. Dorret screamed and tried to kick the damsel's hand away. Though the blows tore loose more of the damsel's skin, the fiend did not relinquish her grip. At the mouth of the well, Dulcet pulled at the rope with all her might, but to no avail. Just when Dorret thought she could not pull herself away from the damsel, an idea came to her. She dug the toe of her left shoe into the heel of the shoe the damsel clutched and pried it off her foot. Dorret scrambled up the rope, leaving the damsel clutching her shoe. When she reached the top, Dorret rushed to embrace her sister.

Dulcet and Dorret vowed never to tell their parents about the damsel in the well. The damsel visited Dorret for the rest of her life, but only in nightmares. For the evil spirit could not leave the well unless she found a new body, and to this day she hasn't found one.

And the moral of this story is: "Intelligent girls escape the troubles wise girls avoid." ☹



in the shadow of the valley of the bomb pop ice cream for crow

last notes from the great lost big lik expedition by eddie dean

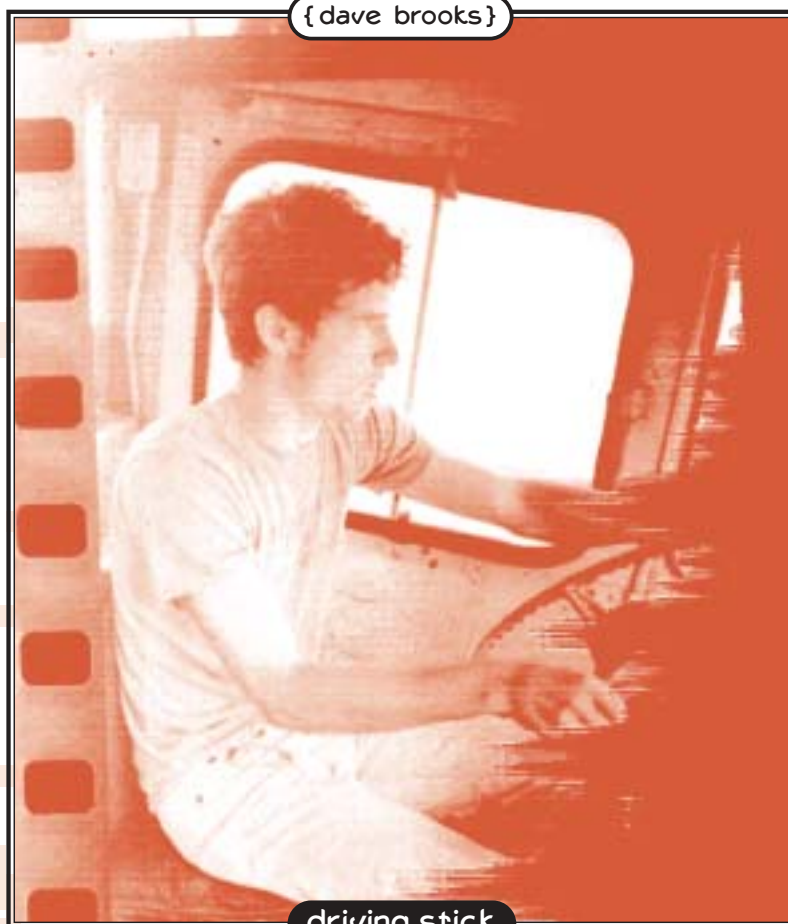
I first discovered the power of a Fudge Bomb when I was surrounded by a family of Blue Ridge Mennonites who hadn't seen the ice cream truck for a week. All their Fudge Bombs had run out days ago, and their Sno-Cones and Chocolate Chump Bars, too. Their sturdy white frame house sat on a hill in Greene County, Virginia, and I was parked before it in my truck, both of us coughing up dust after the long climb up the winding gravel driveway. These people were hurting badly. We were here to help them.

For generations, locals have found this rocky region as poor as a snake. But it's been a goldmine for interlopers—first the folk-song collectors and then the government men and the social workers and finally the movie stars here for peace of mind and land for their trotting horses. The movie stars didn't buy ice cream, not off a truck anyway. Just about everybody else did, though. At least, they did back then. This was 20 years ago, before gourmet ice cream and the culture of instant gratification. If you lived in Greene County, the only way you could get a Fudge Bomb was from my truck.

A Fudge Bomb is a brown and yellow "quiescently frozen confection" impaled on a stick and molded in the shape of a Sputnik-era nuclear warhead. It is infused with an equatorial stripe of artificially flavored banana that beads with tropical sweat when unveiled in the July heat by a Mennonite housewife in a gingham dress. At the time I was selling them, a Fudge Bomb cost 60 cents, a crucial dime more than its red-white-and-blue cousin, the Superstar Bomb Pop, but well worth the extra investment. No mere popsicle, a Fudge Bomb is a bona fide meal.

The Mennonites are a strict denomination. For them, every day is a holy day, and they dress and try to behave as such. But there is nothing in their rules that forbids the indulgence of sweets. And no visiting preacher ever inspired more joy than did the driver of the truck with the BIG LIK license plates. I would often linger in the shade as the family members gathered on the green lawn, becalmed by the sacrament of ice cream. The rippling folds of the Blue Ridge mountains stretched to the horizon, as big white clouds drifted by like so many covered wagons. At such a moment of a bright Sunday many summers ago, I understood why their ancestors decided to nestle here instead of pushing west. This perch would do fine until the Battle of Armageddon.

Those were good customers, that family, one of several Mennonite families on the route. They even bought ice cream for their livestock. They had a goat named Curly leashed to a tombstone in the family graveyard, a stone-walled plot near the driveway. His reward for keeping the grass trim was an ice-cream sandwich. The Mennonites were businesspeople themselves. I'd often pass roadside stands where they sold homemade peanut butter pies to the weekend tourists from Washington, D.C.



They were better off than most of my customers, who had little in worldly possessions other than the junk accumulated on their ramshackle properties. Yet even the most destitute were no less faithful when that ice cream bell came ringing. For them, the unbidden arrival of the BIG LIK truck was proof that even if they weren't among the affluent or the righteous, they would not be

later worked for a spell as a Wall Street commodities broker.) The route survived until the late '80s, and it was during those twilight years when I drove the truck.

I worked for a two-vehicle renegade independent without allegiance to the corporate-owned fleets that dominate the industry. My truck was a converted '71 GMC step van weighted down by a lead-lined, coffin-sized freezer.

**NO SANE BUSINESSMAN WOULD
HAVE EVEN CONSIDERED IT,
MUCH LESS ACTUALLY ATTEMPTED IT.**

denied their just desserts—even if it meant scraping together a fistful of pennies for a 25-cent popsicle.

Behind the wheel of BIG LIK, in the shadow of the hazy, hallucinatory Blue Ridge, I believed I'd found my calling, though at 20 I would have never used such a word. All I knew was that it didn't seem like work and it beat delivering pizza in a borrowed car. What began as a seasonal job during my time at the University of Virginia held me in Charlottesville well after graduation. It wasn't driving the truck that hooked me: I fell for the geography. I'd grown up in the lowland Piedmont of Richmond, and there was something about this rugged landscape that moved me. Whatever the reason, the mountains cast a spell that I couldn't shake.

It was naive, to be sure. Nonetheless, I knew in my gut that I was lucky to gain passage on this route, the only one of its kind in the history of the Shenandoah Valley, and perhaps in the entire United States. It was a foolhardy expedition from the start. No sane businessman would have even considered it, much less actually attempted it. The meandering circuit was carved out of the ridges and hollows three decades ago by hippie entrepreneurs who didn't know any better. (One

On the filthy, battered exterior, a painted tin plate promised "Happy Time Ice Cream." The truck was customized well beyond the BIG LIK tags, down to a Radio Shack cassette tape deck and a photo of a stoned Sly Stone above the rear-view mirror. Sly sported a floppy, rhinestone-studded pimp's hat and an ultra-baked expression of grim weariness that gave warning to all who would pursue the perpetual buzz.

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom, sayeth William Blake, and Sly was our road-wizened guru. More than that, he was our very own orisha, our guardian spirit against the highway patrol, our patron saint of Hot Fun And Weird Shit In The Summertime. He was also the source of countless queries from customers demanding to know who in the hell he was. The '60s counterculture was little more than a rumor in these parts. If you said Woodstock, you were talking about a town off Lee Highway where the only long-hairs were a breed of pig. The heroes around here were bad dudes on TV who drove fast and talked trash and kicked ass: Richard Petty and Wahoo McDaniel and Mr. T and the Dukes of Hazzard.

The county routes, as we called them, traversed the farthest reaches of

Greene and Page counties, southern Appalachian outbacks little changed since the Depression. Just two hours' drive from the nation's capital, it was a world away in every other respect. No maps of the routes exist except the one in my head. The journey began near an abandoned woolen mill in Charlottesville and ended 12 hours later and a hundred miles away in a synesthesia of smoldering asbestos brake pads and melted Dreamsicles on the hot floorboard steps. It was a grueling ride for the driver and eventually a money drain for the company, but the route gave a taste of a bygone era when hauling ice cream by truck lived up to its mythic status as a vital American ritual.

At the time, the ice cream truck was still a unifying force that transcended class lines and social status: The haves and the have-nots alike hailed down BIG LIK for a quick fix. Besides the county routes, there were the town and city routes, our big moneymakers. The town route included some well-to-do suburbs where some people patronized the truck every so often for the kick of some half-remembered nostalgia. They deemed it proper parenting to make selections for their kids—ice-cream sandwiches and "healthy" items. Like the children, who craved adventurous fare like cherry Screwballs and Elephant Ears, I despised these parents for their well-meaning stupidity.

The most lucrative stops on the town and city runs were in the poorer neighborhoods, where dogs and kids roamed unsupervised.

From May until past Halloween, we trolled these anarchic projects and trailer parks every day of the week, sometimes twice a day, as ubiquitous as the cops and the drug dealers. Some parents decided we were another

Pusherman on the prowl; one irate mother yanked the arm of a BIG LIK passenger to check for needle marks. For many children, the constant dose of Bomb Pops really did become an ugly habit. Some groveled and begged for a freebie, ice cream smeared on their angry, squinted faces. I couldn't much blame them, because it was our relentless hard sell that fed their addiction.

Even so, BIG LIK provided balm when needed. Once, on the edge of the town route, not far from the house of a devout female customer who had the same sprout of chin whiskers you see in photos of Confederate president Jefferson Davis, I came upon a cat writhing in the hot tar road, struck down moments before the truck rolled up. A man appeared from a nearby house and identified the dying animal. He went back home and returned carrying a pistol. As his daughter and her friends stood by shrieking, he walked a few paces off the road behind some bramble. One shot rang out, and another. Then he ambled over to the truck and bought a Sno-Cone for his daughter.

Next to the mercenary grind of the city and town routines, the county routes were a revelation. A few miles outside Charlottesville, the manicured, fenced-in spreads of gentrified



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sublime trumpet, pedal steel and vibraphone push and pull against a world-class rhythm section, gently developing instrumental themes of loss and redemption.
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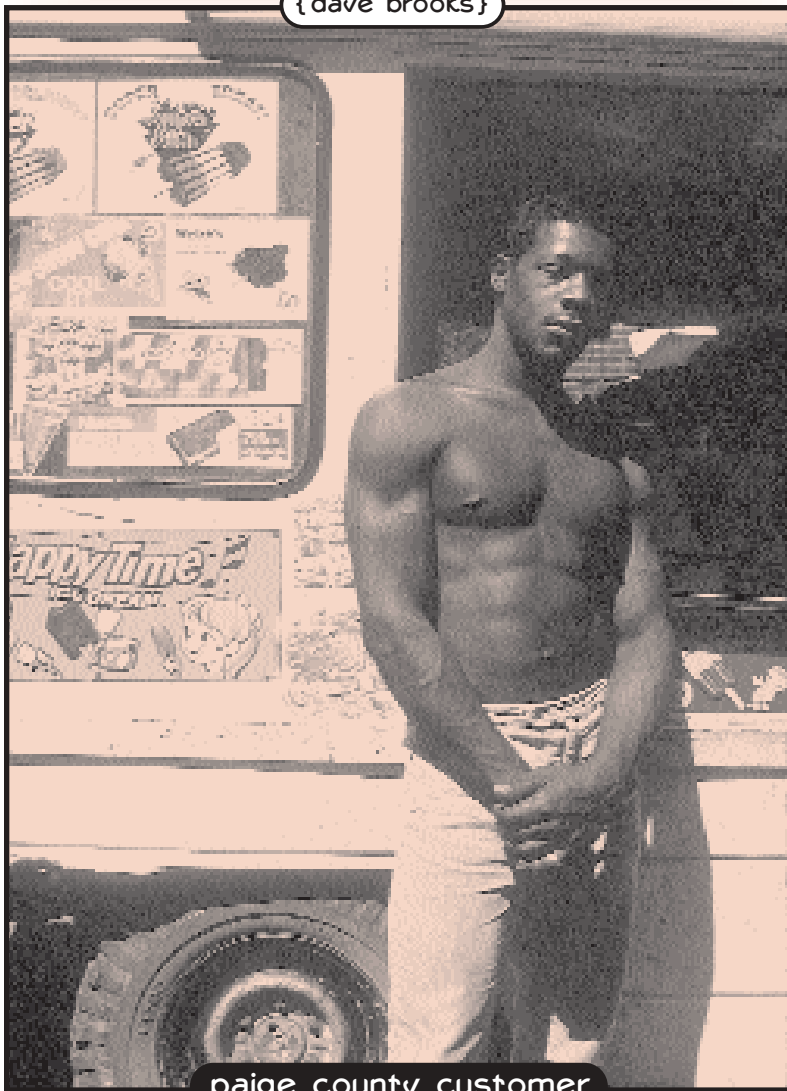
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in the shadow of the valley of the bomb pop ice cream for crow

{dave brooks}



paige county customer

horse farms gave way to the great wide open of hardcore ice cream country. Heading west of Ruckersville on

"Playground for Washingtonians." Popular opinion of the time had little sympathy for their plight. Some Blue



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BIG LIK WAS SOMETHING ALTOGETHER NEW HERE, AN INTRUDER CAME TO PEDdle INSTEAD OF PILLAGE.

Route 33, I welcomed the sight of the hog pens and the coops for fighting chickens and rusted cars half-buried in the ground. These were the tell-tale signs of serious ice cream customers. Some houses were strictly for shelter and barely that. One family, faithful and longtime patrons, resided in an abandoned school bus parked permanently a few feet off the road.

Out in these green hills and dark hollows, the people were always happy to see BIG LIK. For generations, most outsiders seen in these parts came only to plunder. In 1916 and 1918, British musicologist Cecil Sharp made several trips to the area, collecting folk songs that had survived for centuries. These were bloody murder ballads and ditties about dead babies and assorted domestic tragedies. From Florence Puckett he got "The Shooting of His Dear" and "The Cuckoo"; from Horton Barker came "Hares of the Mountains" and from Leila Yowell, "The Farmer's Cursed Wife." From Lizzie Gibson, who Sharp recalled as "a fine woman and regular type of mountaineer who sang very well," he got "Pretty Saro" and "Earl Brand." Sharp collected hundreds of tunes, many dating back to Elizabethan times, and published them in English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians.

At first locals had taken Sharp for a German spy, but it was their own government who proved to be the enemy. In the '30s, federal authorities evicted hundreds of mountain families to make way for the newly created Shenandoah National Park, the so-called

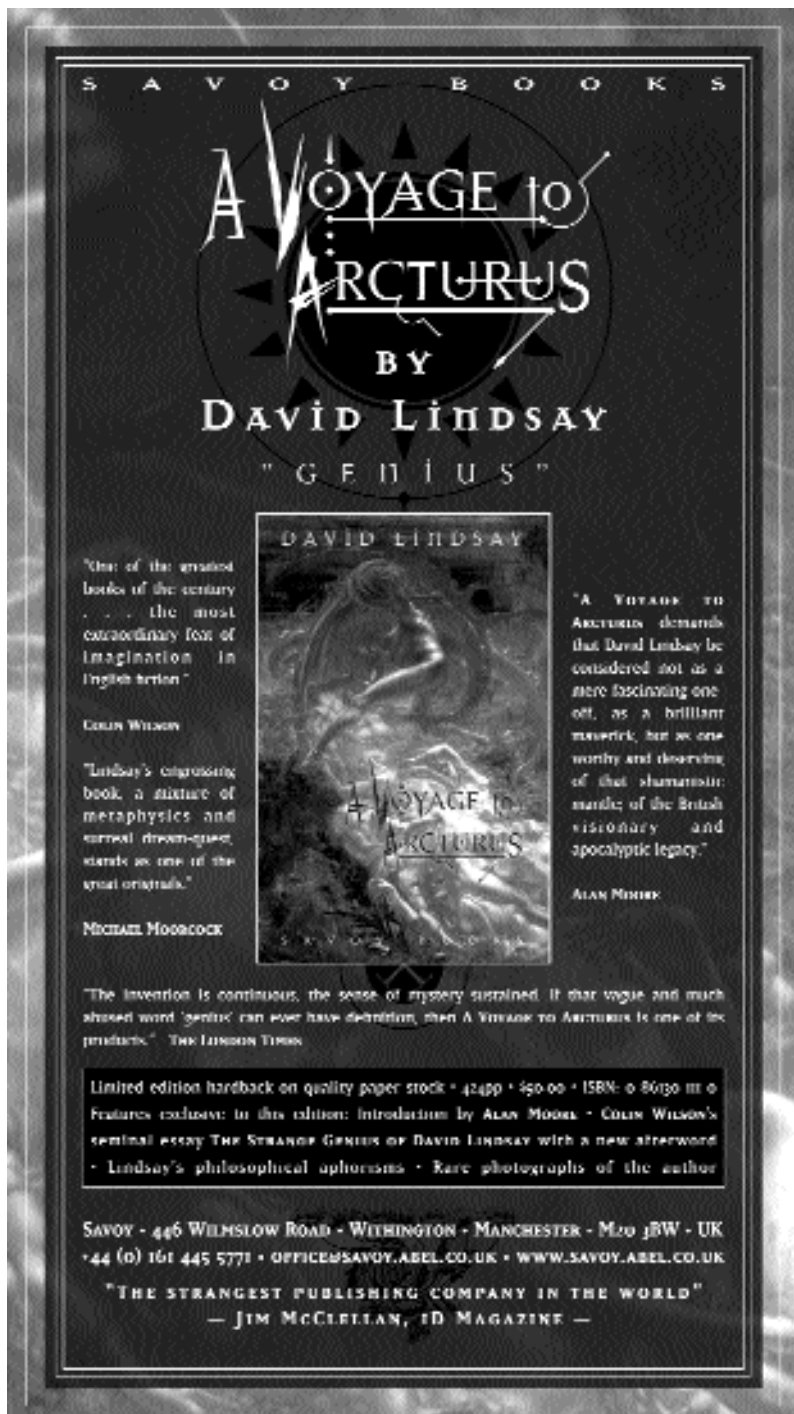
Ridgers did not leave willingly. It took four deputies to arrest Melancthon Cliser, a 62-year-old gas station owner. Evicted from his house, with his wife, dog and possessions dumped on the roadside, Cliser delivered a quivering rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as he was handcuffed and taken to jail. Before it was over, authorities had conducted a forced removal that left century-old homesteads in charred ruins. Some of my customers were among the displaced, and they still lived in the shabby prefab houses the government built for them in resettlement areas. Not a few carried a bitterness against the feds that time only deepened. It was probably just as well they didn't know that our ice cream came from a wholesale supplier in Washington.

So BIG LIK was something altogether new here, an intruder came to peddle instead of pillage. We came only once or twice a week, so they never got tired of us. On the county routes, politeness was the rule, and the barter system was often in effect. A carton of watermelon-flavored Italian ice for a fresh mulberry pie; a Chipwich for a clay-encrusted can of Pabst Blue Ribbon buried for God knows how long in some secret hiding place. They bestowed their own names on favorite items. A Nutty Buddy was a drumstick, an Eskimo Pie a chocolate cover, and a Neapolitan ice-cream sandwich a Napoleon.

The locals showed a genuine concern for the truck's well being. They sympathized with its dilapidated condition and greeted a flat tire with the

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in the shadow of the valley of the bomb pop ice cream for crow

swift attention of those who know what it is to be in need. The men who helped with a tow or a tool kit refused any offers of free ice cream as thanks. They were poor but fiercely proud, and they were quick to forgive as well. One BIG LIK driver got his kicks swerving at jaywalking animals instead of around them. Wild or domesticated, all God's creatures were potential roadkill to him. The owner of a dog run down by this assassin had only a stern reprimand for the driver the next time through: "You could have at least cleaned it up."

However, some events could never be forgotten, even if they happened more than a century ago. One man stopped patronizing the truck after he discovered that the driver was a descendant of a Union officer in the Civil War. You often hear how mountain people refused to fight for the South, but around here they did, and they remembered. The town of Earlysville was named for Rebel General Jubal Early, and battle reenactments were part of the local social calendar. The Shenandoah Valley, the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, was a crucial strategic stronghold during the war. Our route followed many of the same mountain passes where Stonewall Jackson's troops zig-zagged on the all-night marches that so beleaguered the Yanks.

Out here, the ice cream bell was no mere prop but a signal I depended on when I entered a hollow. The sound of the electric bell hung in the air for

in every nook and cranny of the upper Blue Ridge. The Shiffletts spelled their name every conceivable way, but they all liked ice cream.

I liked ice cream, too. It was free for us drivers, but it had its price. The 12-hour route meant a steady intake of Bomb Pops and Chump Bars and barbecue chips, washed down with six-packs of sodas. The resulting highs and lows were a damning indictment of the dangers of processed sugar. The debilitating effects were tempered by the music that was my constant companion.

I was fortunate in this regard, because I had access to a record library that rivaled any I had ever seen. It belonged to my friend Robert Hull, a writer for *Creem* during its heyday, who I met at the campus radio station where we were disc jockeys. A Memphis native, he lived and breathed music and literature, and he was a mentor at a time when I was first discovering Melville and the Mekons. One summer, I needed a place to stay, so I camped for a spell at Robert's house, the truck's freezer kept humming overnight via an extension cord strung through a kitchen window.

Robert's stash of vinyl was arranged with an archivist's care in a small corner room of his duplex. The shrine was presided over by a life-size poster of Carlene Carter in a fringe miniskirt and cowboy boots, an icon that impressed me almost as much as the collection itself. These were the days

THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SEVERAL HUNDRED MEMBERS OF THIS CLAN IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THE UPPER BLUE RIDGE.

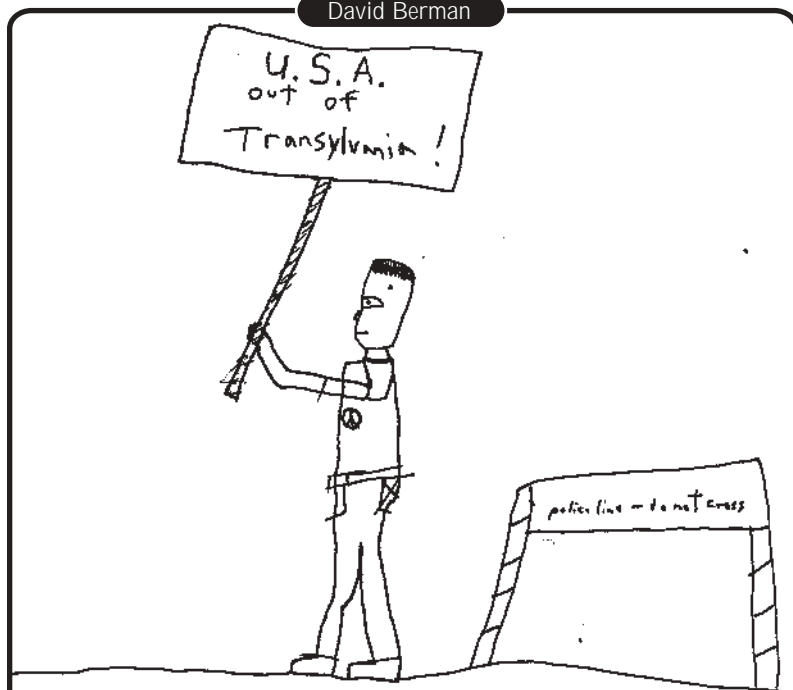
miles around, alerting customers of my arrival. (Once, the far-flung ringing wooed a calf that mistook the sound for its mother, broke free from a fenced field and followed a half-mile.) Leaning hard on the bell, I would make a high-speed run to the dead end of a hollow where the state road hits gravel. On the ride back out, my customers waited in anxious clumps, sometimes three generations strong—maybe an inquisitive rooster or two scratching up some dust behind them. They stood next to battered mailboxes with handscrawled names: Morris, Roach, Shifflett. That last surname was by far the most prevalent in the region. There must have been several hundred members of this clan

before CD reissues, and here was a gloryhole of out-of-print, impossible-to-find gems: Skip Spence's *Oar*, *Bo Diddley Is a Gunslinger*, Dusty Springfield's *Dusty in Memphis*, Swamp Dogg's *Total Destruction To Your Mind*, James Brown's *Thinking of Little Willie John and a Few Nice Things* and Lester "Roadhog" Moran and the Cadillac Cowboys' *Alive at Johnny Mack Brown High School*. I made tapes for heavy rotation on the truck's cassette deck.

Oar became a favorite on the route. Everything about it fascinated me, from the cryptic note on the back cover ("Dedication: Olga") to the album's legendary backstory. Recovering from a

continued on page 22

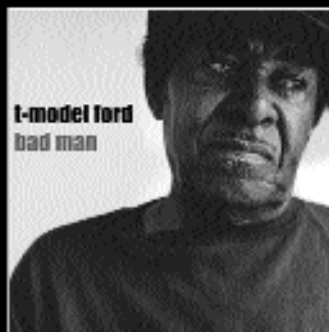
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lift to experience the greatest art-rock band since sigur ros talk about the passion with jay babcock

Josh Pearson, the 28-year-old singer-guitarist-songwriter for the extraordinary Denton, Texas-based art-rock band Lift to Experience, works in a world positively drenched in Judeo-Christian allusion and metaphor. So of course he's conducting a mid-tour interview on a cell phone from a Manhattan pub called the Slaughtered Lamb.

"Yeah, it's perfect," he says, with a chuckle. "It's like, 'Where do we go? Oh, there's a spot.'"

Lift to Experience are in New York City on their first-ever extended tour of America. It's a tour that's been a long time coming, in support of a debut album—the audacious, double-CD concept record *The Texas-Jerusalem Crossroads*—that itself was a long time in gestation. The songs that made it onto the album were originally composed in 1998, after Pearson had moved out to a ranch to work as a farmhand.

"It wasn't a career move," he says. "I just needed a place to be alone and not have to talk to anyone, to have enough time where the good ideas could become great ideas. I was alone and isolated and living in this little barn. It wasn't glamorous, it was just mindless work: shoveling up the shit and taking the horses out to pasture and feeding them hay. It's real therapeutic working with horses..."

Soon, the songs came. And with them, the concept for the album. No brief summary of *The Texas-Jerusalem Crossroads* can do it justice, Texas-style or otherwise. The album's opening, spoken announcement is: "This is the story of three Texas boys busy minding their own business when the Angel of the Lord appeared unto them saying, 'When the Winston Churchills start firin' their Winston rifles into the sky from the Lone Star State, drinkin' their Lone Star beer and smokin' their Winston cigarettes, Know the time is drawin' nigh when the son shall be lifted on high.'"

Pearson says *Texas-Jerusalem* is "a concept album about the end of the world, where Texas is the Promised Land—the final battleground in the war between good and evil." But it's about more than that. The double-album's lyrics are full of bursting with freight trains and incoming storms, strange prophets and fallen feathered angels, blood and fool's gold. Its protagonists are an ambitious Texas rock band desperate for a smash hit, ready, metaphorically at least, to deal their souls to the devil at Robert Johnson's crossroads in exchange for material success. But Satan doesn't show. Instead, it's the Angel of the Lord, announcing "just as was told/Justice will unfold."

"Don't you boys know nothin'?" the Angel asks the band, puzzled by the news of imminent holy conflict on Texas soil. "The USA is the center of JerUSAlem."

Then, the music volcanoes. The rhythm is muscular, spacious, dynamic; the guitar is meditative, gossamer drone parted by noise mass and riff shapes; and the vocals are uniquely full and rich—triumphant yet resigned—sung in a beautiful voice of steady comfort. The lyrics—

the metaphors, the literary and contemporary allusions—are relentless and poetic: the simple word 'star' means, at once, the Lone Star state, the Jewish Star of David, the Christian Star of Bethlehem and, of course, Rock Star. A lot of work was put into this album, obviously. Taking it all in is a dizzying, overwhelming experience.

"It worked out real well with what I wanted to do with the metaphors," says Pearson. "Texas being the place of last stands, from the Alamo. And Texas being an individual nation in its own, with freedoms that it celebrates that the other states don't have—it can secede at any time, the only flag allowed to fly the same height as the American flag, that sort of thing, cuz it was a nation before it merged with the States."

"I started writing songs and they were all pointing to a place and then one night, I realized where it was headed. It made itself known. It's one of those things where your body is just sorta following intuitively. I wouldn't say you're channeling it, but you're trusting in your intuition that it's headed in the right direction. Sometimes you never know why you're headed that way, but it works out. All the pieces fall into place."

Incredibly, Lift to Experience does

vocal, power trio cover of—I shit you not—"Kashmir." It was intense, immediate, absolutely massive. There was Josh (The Bear) Browning—a bass throbber of burly frame, serious beardage and eyes-closed concentration; there was Andy Young, a drummer with the build of the sturdiest steakhouse either side of the Rio Grande, leaning forward off the stool Keith Moon-like, switching between mallets, drumsticks and handclaps, his cymbals in perpetual perpendicularity; and there was Josh T. Pearson, a gangly lanky-framed, scraggly-haired guitar-vocalist in biker Nudiewear and bracelets, his beaten cowboy hat ringed by thorns.

They seamed straight from "Kashmir" into an instrumental version of their own majestic "Just As Was Told" without breaking. It was that rare kind of performance that dapples your skin with goosebumps. All the stuff on the album was there: the long builds and graceful a capella interludes, the churning muscularity and psychedelic overload. We're talking presence.

"We were influenced by all the early '90s shoegazer stuff," says Pearson. "Ride, Pale Saints, Swervedriver, Medicine, My Bloody Valentine. I think *Loveless* is the best record of the '90s. What I wanted to do in the band was be a combi-

there's one solid note that's just held and held and held. A droning. But it's not a droning to lull you to sleep, it's to take you to a higher place."

It's not all earnestness and bombast. Pearson's vision integrates the solemnity of a believer (he counts himself a Christian) and the necessary humor of one who's being overwhelmed and knows it. The album's purposefully cheesy cover is an attempt at undercutting any hint of self-importance.

"From the record cover on, you know, we knew we needed an element of humor. We wanted it to look like a rap record, something so narcissistic... but at the same time be self-deprecating, you know? So we took out a preemptive strike against whatever people might have against the album. There's lines in there that were intended to be funny. 'Best band in the whole damn land.' That's just funny. It needs humor in it to pull it off."

With the album finished, Pearson went looking for a label. He found no takers.

"There was a year there where no one wanted to touch this record. I sent it out to indie rock labels, no one responded, not even a 'don't quit your day job.' I knew that I could do a lot less and get a lot more. I could've dumbed it down quite a bit and just made some stupid-ass indie-rock record that might've been good for the times but no one would listen to in a decade. And I was like, Fuck it. This is the only thing I'm going to do with my life.

Doing less would never satisfy me. I'm going to go for the higher good, try to create this piece of art that maybe no one will get, and shoot for much higher and probably get much, much less. But I'm glad I did, because that's the only thing that would satisfy. I didn't think that anybody would get it. I'm still surprised that somebody put the damn thing out."

Pearson's stubbornness and commitment seems to come from his family. He's spoken angrily in interviews about his father, a man who went so deeply Christian that he stopped working and eventually abandoned his family.

"He didn't leave," Pearson corrects me. "We left him. He had gotten involved in this faith movement that sort of swept through after the Jesus movement in the late '70s. There was a lot of talk about the power of the Word, faith, speaking things into existence—basically believing you can get anything you want from God. It got to the point where he wasn't working at all, just trusting in the Lord to provide for all his needs. After a coupla years, my mother had to leave because we were hungry. So she moved to Washington state. I lived with my grandparents for a while, and eventually came back to Texas. My father never paid his child support, and I couldn't wrap my head around that. So the last conversation we had, it was just...basically I told him if he wanted my respect, he would have to earn it, and pay that back child support. My mother just busted her ass, working three jobs at

"IT'S NOT A DRONING TO LULL YOU TO SLEEP, IT'S TO TAKE YOU TO A HIGHER PLACE."

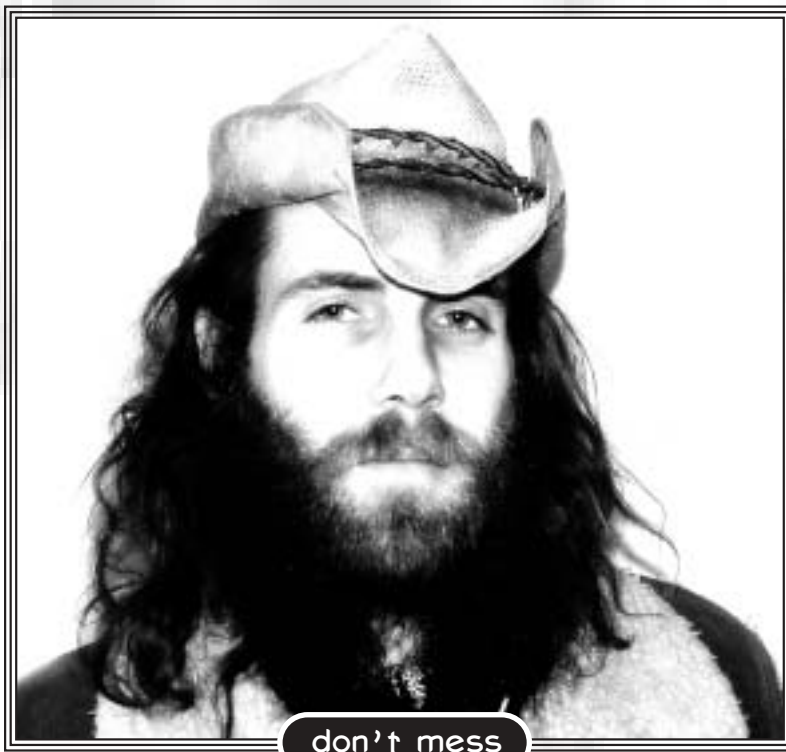
the album one better in a live setting.

The first time I saw them was at 7:15 on a Saturday night in a small bar on Sunset Boulevard in Silver Lake. A stained and horned bullskull sat at stage-center; a Texas flag draped over a bass amp. Behind and above them was the bar's neon-lit sign that read (of course) "Salvation." As the sun dipped into the smog horizon outside, Lift to Experience began playing to an audience of no more than 100, most of whom were unfamiliar with the band's music.

They began suddenly, with almost no notice. And they began with a no-

nation of My Bloody Valentine and Jimi Hendrix—Hendrix in the sense that it was more personality in each instrument. It wasn't noise for noise's sake, everything's there for a purpose.

"I play in an open tuning called DADGAD. There's three Ds there so I can do a lot of finger picking on top and just keep that low, solid note going throughout the song. One of the things I wanted to incorporate was the one-note sustains, where one note goes throughout the entire song, because I think it's not just Eastern music but a lot of the Western music too, classical stuff, that's my favorite thing is when



don't mess



6 12.03. ALE OR MALT LIQUOR FOR EXPORT

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ACTS 1977, 65TH LEG., P. 414, CH. 194, § 1, EFF. SEPT. 1, 1977.

6 12.04. CONTINUANCE OF OPERATION AFTER LOCAL OPTION ELECTION

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ACTS 1977, 65TH LEG., P. 414, CH. 194, § 1, EFF. SEPT. 1, 1977.

6 12.05. SALES BY CERTAIN BREWERS

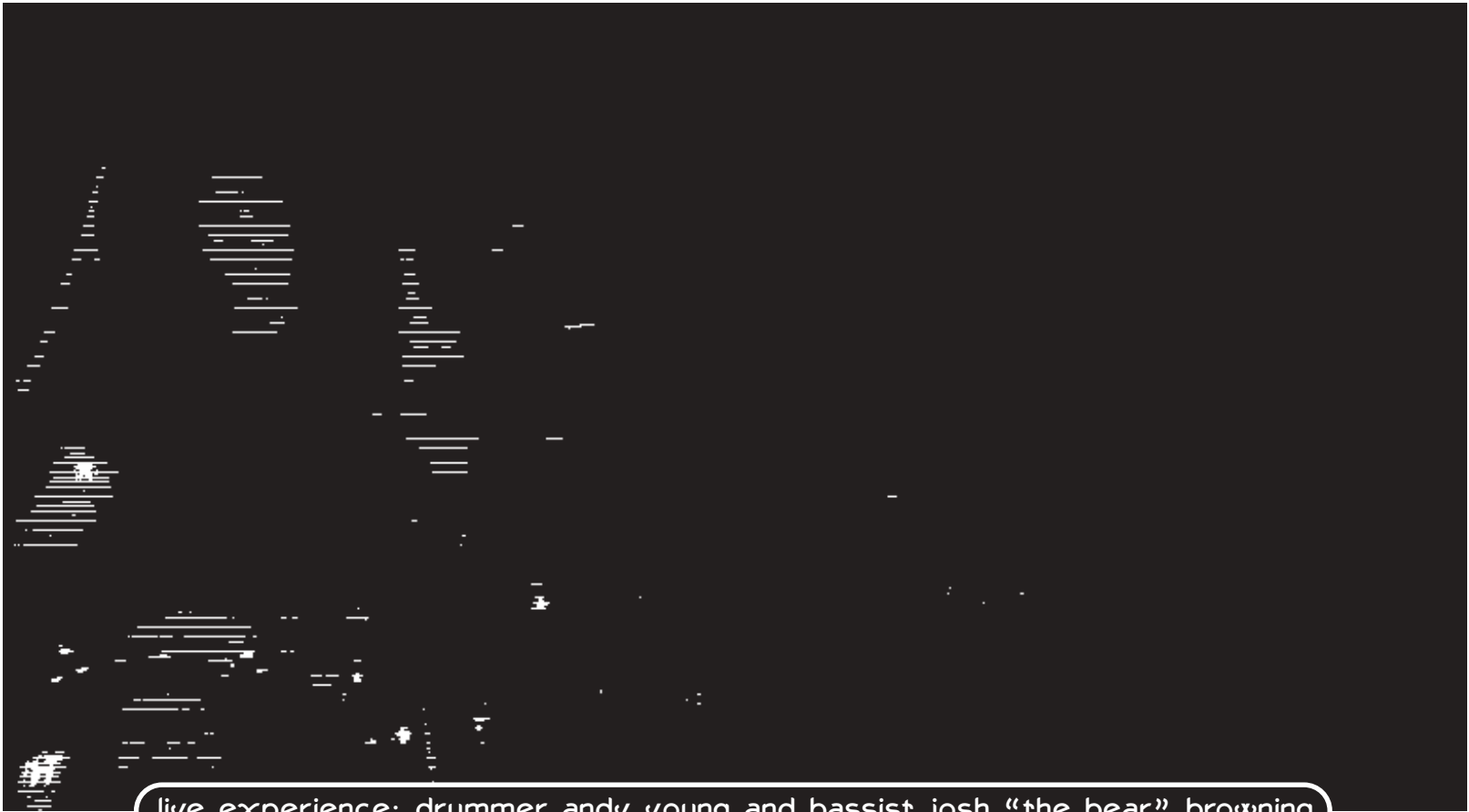
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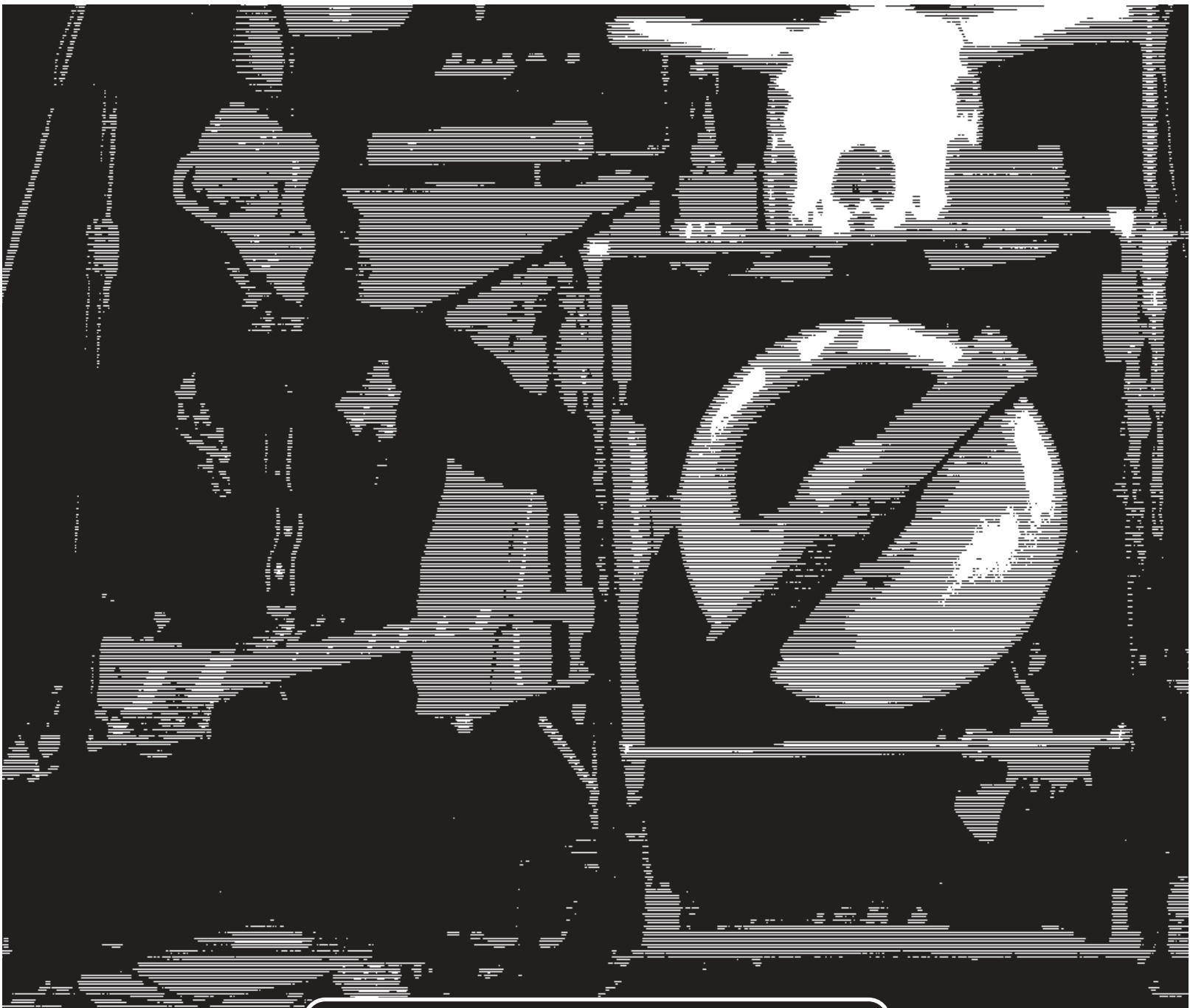
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live experience: drummer andy young and bassist josh “the bear” browning



josh pearson, looking for that one solid note

a time just to provide food for my sister and I, and he's got a fucking master's degree and continues to be a preacher man. It's completely justified in his mind. And that's the frustrating thing, cuz he really believes he's in the right, that he's living righteously.

“I still have issues with him.”

In 2001, *Texas-Jerusalem* was finally released—by Bella Union—to critical acclaim and modest commercial success...in England. The band's relative success there and in other parts of Europe, while remaining an almost unknown quantity in their homeland,

is a point of frustration for Pearson. “You read an American review and it makes them angry, cuz they can't pigeonhole it and don't know what to do with it, and whenever they have a problem with it, it's always because of the religious references. They're saying, This is not good art because I don't agree with their worldview. It's ludicrous. But we'll get great press in the UK and France. I think it's because over there, they're surrounded by majestic art full of religious symbolism, by cathedrals and museums full of Judeo-Christian art, [and] they can appreciate the beauty of some-

thing without being pissed off because they don't agree with it. They can see Michelangelo's angels and not have to believe in the existence of angels and still be moved by 'em, because it's a thing of beauty. Whereas, over here in the States, religion is shoved down people's throats. They don't wanna hear it. So if anything approaches that, it pisses them off. It's ludicrous. If it's good, it's good. Good art exists in and of itself.

“At the same time, you know, fuck it, I don't care. I've got full confidence in what we're doing and our ability to write a song and the

future of it. If it takes America 15 or 20 years, I could give a fuck. We'll keep putting shit out, and our sound will bury 'em. I've got about ten tapes filled with ideas in a general direction of where it's gonna go, it's called *The Post-Apocalyptic Blues Volumes 1 and 2*. Sort of like *Use Your Illusion*. That's a joke. Well, it is kinda like it—releasing it might cause us to disappear as quick as that record did them...” @

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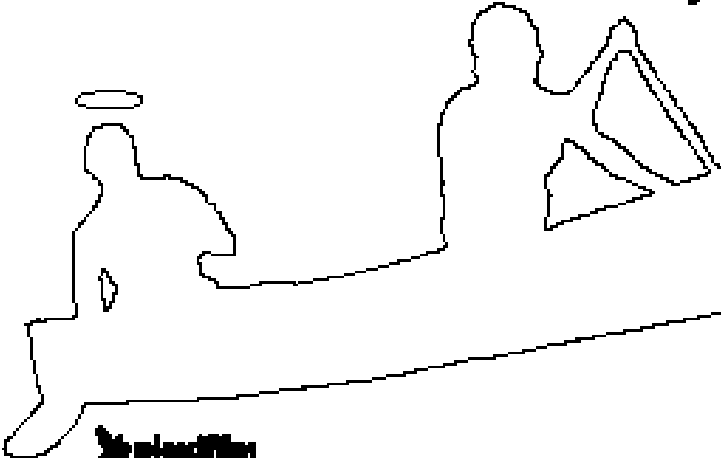
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in the shadow of the valley of the bomb pop

ice cream for crow

continued on page 17

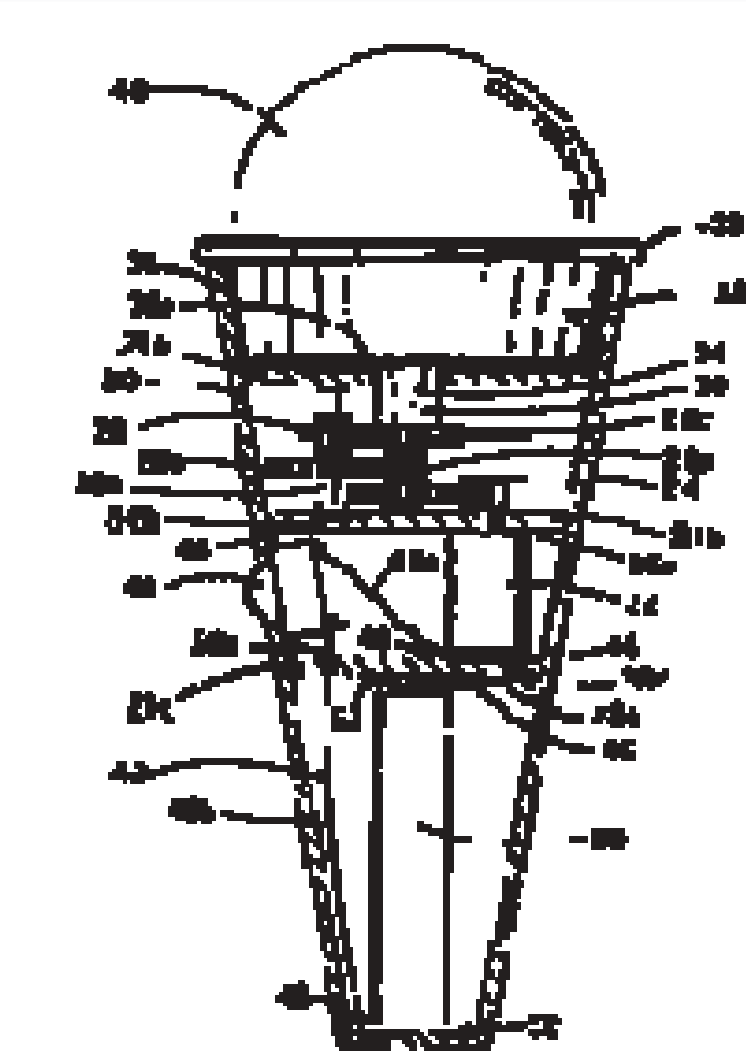
breakdown, Spence wrote the songs during a lengthy stay at Bellevue's psychiatric ward. Upon his release, he hopped a motorcycle down to Nashville, where he recorded the material in several fevered sessions, playing all the instruments himself. The music, a side-trip of cracked C&W, deeply skewed blues, and backwoods psychedelia, was equal parts Old Testament, the I-Ching and Gene Autry, varied enough to sustain the ever-changing geography and mood swings of the marathon route. "Little Hands," with its refrain of "children singing and pipers piping," perfectly captured the bushy-tailed promise of the opening stops when the morning dew still lingered in the shade. "Dixie Peach Promenade (Yin for Yang)" and "Lawrence of Euphoria" went well with a lunch of Fruity Patooty Bomb Pops. Later, when the sun dropped behind a ridge and shut off the light in some far hollow close by an old Mennonite cemetery, "Cripple Creek" or "Books of Moses" would clang out and I could hear the dogs get to howling.

One of Robert's records became a sort of BIG LIK anthem, and to my mind remains the greatest ice cream truck-driving song of all time. Rockin' Sidney's "My Toot Toot" was a home demo recorded by the zydeco veteran in his bedroom studio. In the summer of '84, it broke as a national hit and was everywhere, including BIG LIK's tape deck. Like some Trenchtown mobile flatbed sound system blasting the latest dub side in the Jamaican countryside, I cranked "Toot Toot" extra loud for my customers, bringing a taste of the Louisiana bayou to the southern Appalachians. Not once did anyone tell me to turn it down, and, really, who but the most cold-hearted could resist its charm? One of the most infectious novelty dance tunes to ever feature a drum machine, "Toot Toot" was tailor-made for a sputtering rig like BIG LIK. The cheapo drum machine's clunky beat mimicked the truck's lurching automatic drive, and Rockin' Sidney's Creole interjections somehow emboldened the tired engine on steep climbs, the way a rider urges on a stubborn nag.

Overall, though, it was bluegrass that proved the most nourishing sustenance on the route. Robert had plenty of the mossy old records of Bill Monroe, Flatt & Scruggs, Reno & Smiley and the Stanley Brothers. This countryside was not much different than the one that inspired Carter Stanley's "The White Dove," composed on a pre-dawn drive heading home from a show in the '50s: "In the deep rolling hills of old Virginia, there's a place I love so well..."

The beauty of the land spoiled me as surely as did the free ice cream. The variety of vistas, from roadside cliffs strung with kudzu beards to boulder-strewn, stubbled fields, seemed infinite. Sometimes a thunderstorm would dance across a valley half-lit by a blazing sun, and the scampering downpour reeled off a succession of rainbows I would chase but never catch. And always the Blue Ridge framed the view, with humble names like Brokenback Mountain, old as the continent. These were no majestic peaks to conquer, but worn-down, welcoming hills to burrow into.

My boss refused to bother with the county routes, which he'd inherited



THOSE EXPECTING TO MEET THE WALTONS WERE IN FOR A RUDE AWAKENING; THE AMOUNT OF ROADKILL ALONE PROVED DAUNTING ENOUGH FOR SOME.

when he bought the business. His pride and joy was the one he developed, the highly profitable city route, the twice-a-day circuit through Charlottesville's poorest neighborhoods. He usually spent the off-season globe-trotting in exotic realms such as India and Tibet, taking photos of Buddhist monks and their prayer flags high in the Eastern sky. I would tell him he was missing out on some mystical terrain right in his own backyard. The Blue Ridge had its own ancient spirits, even if they lacked the faintest whiff of patchouli.

One of the drivers, Dave Brooks, understood my affinities. He was raised in Bath County near the West Virginia line, so he was no stranger to the mountains. It was Brooks who taught

me the county routes, and his enthusiasm for the people and places stoked my youthful appreciation. He truly loved the Greene and Page runs, and he drove them more often than any other driver. It was only years later that I discovered that Brooks had been documenting the routes with his camera.

Looking at his photos nearly two decades hence, I can remember every face, though I never knew their names and they didn't know mine. The photos remind me how sharply the bucolic setting contrasted with the dire poverty of the locals. They came to the truck barefoot and bandaged and black-eyed, in threadbare clothes and in metal curlers. They rarely displayed jewelry of any kind—instead, there was the necklace of fresh red hickies

on the pale neck of a teenage girl, or the raw insect bites on the spindly, hairy legs of some crone with an unfiltered Camel smoldering in her sun-blistered lips as she counted out pennies for a popsicle, or the hardened scab on the bloodshot, bulbous nose of an old farmer who always received his purchase on a cast-iron skillet. The geezer said the ice cream was too cold for his gnarled, trembling hands. It was obvious many of the children were hungry for more than ice cream, and when the adults would flash a gap-toothed smile, I could see the years of Bomb Pops had done their work.

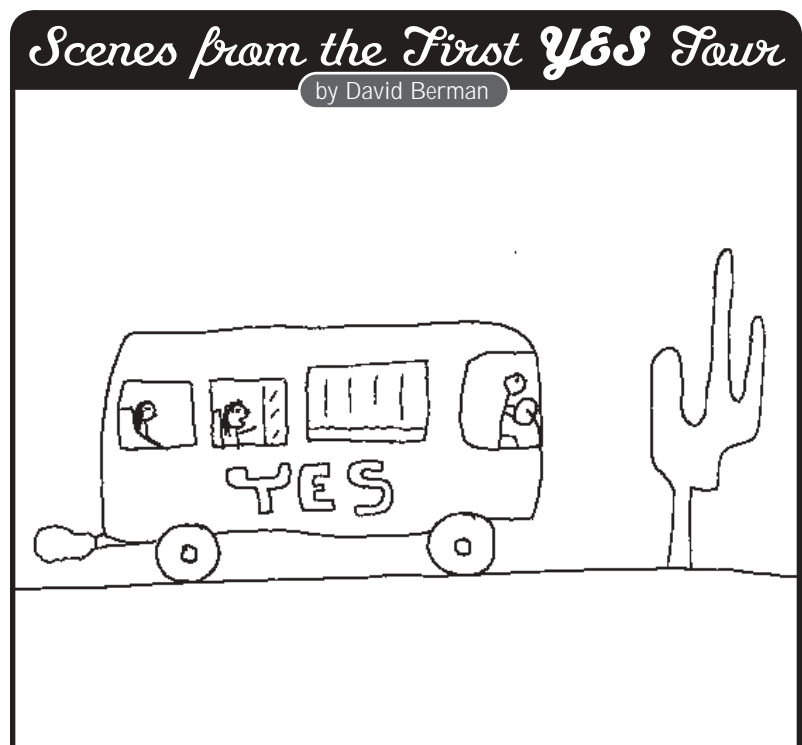
For friends who joined me on the route, this scenario could make for some unsettling encounters. Those expecting to meet the Waltons were in for a rude awakening; the amount of roadkill alone proved daunting enough for some. Not long into the journey, they quietly put away their cameras and huddled in a corner away from the sales window when the customers clamored around. Others used chemicals to try to commiserate with the surroundings. One day-tripper ate some psychedelic mushrooms along with his Bomb Pop. Somewhere outside Earlysville, he said he needed some fresh air and bolted from the truck as it rounded a curve.

As for myself, I got used to the hard lot of the BIG LIK customers. After a long day on the truck, I didn't spend much time pondering the harsh economic conditions. One of the drivers said we were exploiting these people, but I couldn't see the injustice. All I saw was my customers happy to see the truck every week, grateful that somebody hadn't forgotten them. I'd take my cut of grimy, sweat-stained bills from the money box, buy a six-pack of Black Label and give thanks that I didn't have to work a real job. For me, the county route was a paid adventure that I knew wouldn't last, so I relished it.

The truck gave me entry into places otherwise offlimits to outsiders. Bacon Hollow abutted the Appalachian Trail and the Shenandoah National Park. It was poor and insular even by Greene County standards, shunned by most beer-drinking Christians. Bacon Hollow earned its reputation as a place unfriendly to strangers, especially the county social workers meddling in their domestic affairs.

They had their own way of talking in Bacon Hollow. They had their own ways, period. It was not uncommon to see crude effigies nailed to trees. In the late '70s, a driver got embroiled in a local family feud when a Shifflett gunned down a Morris. He'd recently had a run-in with this same Shifflett, who had invited him to join a roadside corn-liquor party. "If you don't have a drink with us," he said, "You ain't getting out of the hollow this evening." The driver thought it wise to be polite and partake. The victim's family wanted him to testify as a character witness in the trial. His refusal to take sides earned him death threats and the enmity of both clans. He was forced to quit the route lest he become another casualty.

Bacon Hollow hadn't changed a whit by the time I came through. Here you might get a kid paying with a swiped jarful of old rare coins, and you'd accept the money even if it probably meant he'd get a whipping. Sometimes, pranksters would set out



Driving through the night.

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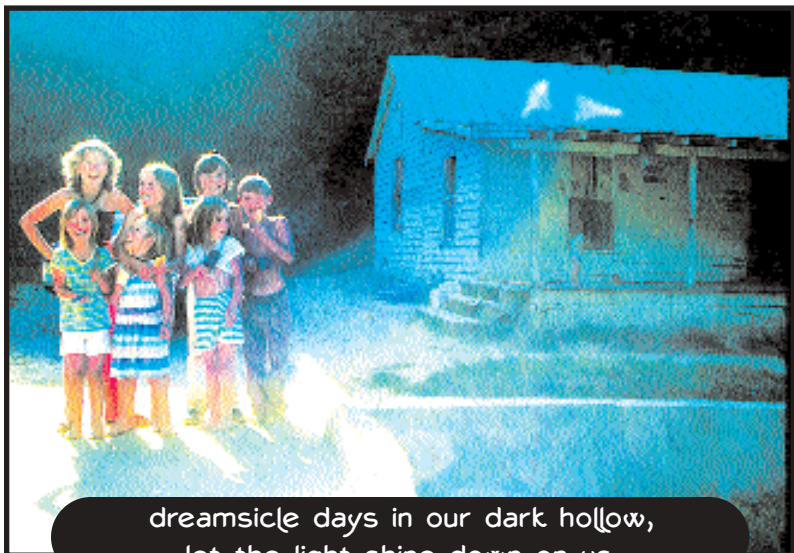
mennonite girl



"who you lookin' at fool?" two items sold out as usual. sister of mr. t holds a superstar bomb pop.



bat boy defends his turf on a new-cut road.




dreamsicle days in our dark hollow,
let the light shine down on us.



page county woman with two daughters



she is my sister, she is my best friend.



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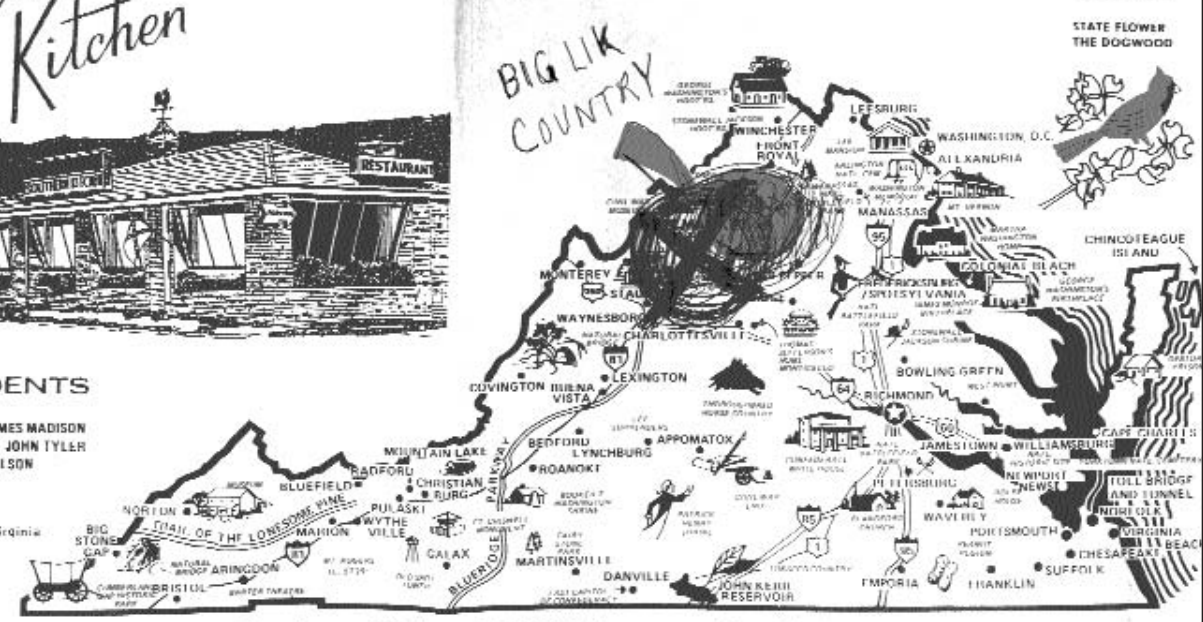


MOTHER OF PRESIDENTS

GEORGE WASHINGTON • THOMAS JEFFERSON • JAMES MADISON
JAMES MONROE • WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON • JOHN TYLER
ZACHARY TAYLOR • WOODROW WILSON

Named for Elizabeth, virgin queen of England, Virginia is the proud mother of states and statesmen, from her original territory, eight states were carved.

Her famous sons are many. Here was the first permanent English settlement in America. And here was the first representative assembly in the new world.



BIG LIK COUNTRY

Southern Kitchen, 9576 S. Congress St., New Market, VA
(540) 740- 3514

boards with nails to give drivers an obstacle course on the way out. One homestead boasted fearsome-looking deer antlers on its porch roof. Like many of the houses here, it lay across a creek from the main road. To get to it, you had to cross a rickety bridge, and there was always some sort of gathering that could number a couple dozen revelers. But there was never a problem. The exiled driver notwithstanding, BIG LIK was always welcome here, and on a good day this was a \$100 hollow. It was a prime example of how the best customers were inevitably the ones who could least afford it.

More ice cream hotbeds were over in Page County. An offshoot that included a chunk of the Greene route, this route was typically a Sunday run that pushed further north into the valley. Brown Hollow was an all-black enclave with a baseball field dug out of a hillside with a backhoe. The players, ranging from kids to stooping grayhairs, were arrayed in their Sunday best, coats off and shirt-sleeves rolled up. Upon hearing the bell, they'd stop the game, and for a half-hour BIG LIK was the center of the community.

On the county routes, the ice cream truck really mattered to people and they responded in kind, with courtesy and heartfelt thanks. Out here, the sins of the city and town routes were redeemed. Out here, the ritual hadn't gone rotten. There was still room for magic, like when I'd reach into the freezer and toss a handful of ice shavings at a group of toddlers—a little touch of snow in summer.

As it turns out, the BIG LIK expedition wasn't able to pay its own way. The truck simply couldn't take the hairpin curves and billy-goat slopes anymore. Barreling back across Swift Run Gap with an empty freezer, the top-heavy rig was always nearly out of control. With a few beers and the high altitude going to my head, I'd ride the brakes hard and BIG LIK would howl like some beast of burden in pain. Eventually our mechanic, Race, had to install new brake pads and other replacement parts every

couple weeks. The truck rarely grossed more than \$300, and my 25-percent take wasn't much after you added up the hours.

changed almost beyond recognition. Hordes of middle class and the newly rich had fled the suburbs to join celebrity homesteaders like Jessica

was a cold, gray winter day, and the scene was bleak. I barely recognized the house without its usual curtain of green vegetation. It was now revealed as the bare shack it was, not a drape on a window, no smoke curling from the stone chimney. At first, I thought maybe the place was abandoned. Where were the strutting chickens and the yapping dogs? Most important, where were the kids who'd clamored for BIG LIK so many years ago?

Then I spotted a couple of gangly teens behind the house, taking turns on a cigarette. They said when they were younger, they were customers of the truck. But ice cream didn't interest them anymore. They were standing in the bitter mountain air, they explained, because it was even colder inside the house. The firewood had run out that morning. We had a laugh recalling some favorites from the truck; they said they were hooked on Screwballs, cherry-flavored ice crammed into a clear plastic cone and packed with bubblegum at the bottom. I have watched many a wild-eyed kid chuck the whole thing to get to that buried treasure.

A beat-up Honda compact pulled up into the dirt driveway and whimpered to a stop. A woman emerged in untied high-top sneakers, a thin, faded coat thrown over her nightgown. She had soft, prematurely graying hair bundled over her worry-lined face. It was the boys' mother. She told them to get the firewood out of the trunk—some pine scraps from a nearby lumberyard. She said she remembered the ice cream truck, but it hadn't come by for years. That was the least of her worries. She had recently been laid off from her job at the textile mill, and somebody had burned down the old family home over on Hightop Mountain.

She watched her sons carry the scraps into the house: "Those boys loved that ice cream." She pulled the coat tight around her and apologized for not inviting me inside. "Next time you come by, I'll have heat in the house," she said in her soft singsong voice. Then she forced a smile and shut the door. **a**

**THEY SAID WHEN THEY WERE YOUNGER,
THEY WERE CUSTOMERS OF THE TRUCK.
BUT ICE CREAM DIDN'T INTEREST THEM ANYMORE.**

And so, by the end of the '80s, the county routes vanished, gone the way of traveling medicine shows and knife peddlers and professional hoboes. Even before its demise, I had already returned to Richmond. Several bad omens helped hasten my retirement. Coming back from Greene County after dark, I ran over a black cat a block from the boss's house, where we usually kept the trucks. My driving record was spotless until then, but that didn't matter much to the pet's owners. Not long after, I backed the truck into a dogwood in my boss's yard, damaging the truck and the state tree of Virginia.

A few years ago, I paid a visit to ice cream country. With the exception of the more remote places like Bacon Hollow, I found the area

Lange and Sissy Spacek in the promised land. They had satellite dishes and spacious tract houses and, no doubt, refrigerators full of grocery-store gourmet ice cream.

The transformation was as sad as it was inevitable. No doubt the poorest of my former customers, like those in Bacon Hollow, were stranded more than ever before, left further and further behind by the tide of prosperity flooding the mountains. BIG LIK wouldn't be much help to them now. No amount of Bomb Pops could bridge the ever-widening gap.

It was a writing project that brought me back, a story on the displaced mountain people. My old route beckoned me deeper into the Blue Ridge, and I found myself parked in front of one of the regular stops. It

David Berman



The harpist at the Sheraton.

the sound of the bone drill

bmX superstardom didn't come cheap, says mat hoffman

I've broken one wrist five times. The other wrist, three times. Between my ankles, I've had five breaks. I've snapped four fingers, my thumbs four times, my hand twice, busted my feet three times, and broken three toes. (You don't think a broken toe would hurt that much, but your entire body weight is on it.) I've busted my collar bones five times, snapped my pelvis, my fibula, my elbow, cracked three ribs and separated a couple from my sternum. (Breaking ribs off the sternum sucks—just about every movement you can think of is centered in your chest.) Then there's my head: one skull fracture, two broken jaws, two broken noses, a mouthful of teeth, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Every choice you make can be traced back to the instinctual need to seek pleasure, and avoid pain. These two forces are interconnected, different sides to the same coin. Since I started bike riding, I wanted more than anything to experience the highest highs. To get there, I was willing to accept the consequences. My medical records contain more than four hundred pages documenting my injuries. I've put myself in a coma, had over fifty knockouts and concussions, been sewn up with over two hundred stitches, dislocated my shoulder more than twenty times, broken about fifty bones, and had over a dozen different surgeries. I've torn ligaments, bruised tissue, severed arteries, spilled blood, and left hunks of my skin stuck to plywood, concrete, dirt, and bicycle components. I've had to endure not just physical pain, but the mental anguish of re-learning how to walk, ride my bike, or even remember who I was. I've dealt with mountains of health insurance red tape, and condescending doctors who took it upon themselves to lecture me before they treated my injuries, as if they needed to save me from myself.

Not everyone understands that I've asked for it, accepted it, and willingly volunteered. Not to sound sadistic, but I consider each of my injuries a tax I had to pay for learning what I could do on my bike. I wanted it all, and wouldn't take any of it back if I could. Yes, I will be sore and broken when I'm older. I can feel it already, the aches and pains of a body that has been beyond and back. I've given up as much of myself as I could, because I love bike riding that much.

My insurance companies have always hated me, having paid hospital bills totaling more than a million dollars over the years. I've had to rely on surgery to keep me going. You know it's getting serious when you start letting people take knives to your body to make you healthy.

Here are my patient notes.

Number 1: Collarbone Crush

November, 1986. It was immediately following a Mountain Dew Trick Team show. I'd just learned 360 drop-ins, and was uncorking them all day. We finished our demo, but I still wanted to ride. I took my chest protector off, figuring I'd just do easy stuff. I lined up parallel to the coping to do a simple hop drop-in, like Eddie Fiola used to do. I stalled in position for a second and went for it. For some reason my brain told my body to react as if I was doing a 360 drop-in. I fell straight to

the cement and took the hit on my head and shoulder. My friend Paige said it made a sound like a helmet being thrown off the ramp with nothing in it—a loud, hollow snap. That was my grand finale. I didn't just break my collarbone, I shattered it. I knocked myself unconscious too. The show was right next door to a hospital, of all places, with two of the best surgeons in Oklahoma City on duty that day. In surgical terms, Dr. Grana and Dr. Yates performed a fourth degree AC joint separation procedure, provided reconstruction of the coracoclavicular ligament, and did a partial removal of my left collarbone.

Number 2: Right Leg, Wrong Move

February, 1988. The 540 is a trick that makes you earn it to learn it. The price is a lot of slams. I finally thought I had them just about dialed in, and did one and looped out. My leg got caught behind me and I sat on it. There was a snapping sound and a blast wave of heat, pain, and nausea. Broken bones have a dull, throbby kind of ache to them. I got into Steve's car to go to the hospital. Every time he hit a bump my leg would sway between my knee and ankle. My

I WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING TO
EXPERIENCE THE HIGHEST HIGHS. TO GET THERE, I
WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES.

body was in shock, and the pain began to subside. We started chuckling every time it swayed, and then started laughing harder about what the hell we were laughing at. Dark humor helps. The doctor I encountered in the ER had very little humor. My first question to him was, "how long before I can ride again?" He told me I would be lucky to walk without a limp and would never ride a bike again. "Okay, thanks...bye," was the next thing out of my mouth. I left that doctor as fast as I could, and my dad got me in to see Dr. Yates. Yates put in a titanium plate (the body rejects steel) and ten screws in my fibula to repair the complete syndesmotic disruption and fibular fracture of my right leg. I missed the first King of Vert in Paris because of this injury.

Number 3: Cartilage Carnage

April, 1988. With a leg full of hardware, I followed the doctor's orders and waited patiently before I started riding again. Finally it healed, and I went to Kansas City to ride with Dennis and Rick. We celebrated with an all-night street session. I was careful not to thrash my leg too hard. The next day I woke up and my knee was swollen, super-sized. It wouldn't move either. I went home and I got a MRI. The internal images revealed that I'd totally ripped both my medial and lateral meniscus in half when I'd broken my leg. The meniscus is a shock-absorbing cartilage in the middle of your knee. When Dr. Yates had put the plate in, he'd never thought to check it for other damage, and I had no idea my knee was jacked. My street session with the

Kansas City BMX Brigade had aggravated the meniscus more and more until it was wrecked. Dr. Yates sewed it back together from the inside. Arthroscopic meniscus repair is considered a less invasive surgical procedure than using the knife. Dr. Yates drilled pencil-sized holes and slid all the tools inside my knee, doing the operation using a tiny video camera. Tech.

Number 4: Ted Nugent Tumor Trauma

December, 1990. I don't know how it happened, but a tumor grew in my right leg. I was diagnosed with Cat Scratch Fever, a shocking prognosis. My entire life, I thought Cat Scratch Fever was a just a cheesy fictitious disease, invented by the Motor City Madman, Ted Nugent. But it was real, and residing in my groin. The viral infection caused a growth to form under my skin. It was about the size and shape of a bar of soap, and it hurt to do can-cans. I had to get the lump removed, and this was right after my mom had died of cancer, so I was sweating it. The growth turned out to be benign. The day after the surgery I went to Austin with Spike Jonze for a road trip. I had to ride with a drainage tube

sticking out of my leg, leaking excess puss. I came up with a few tube variations on vert.

My recovery was also aided by Spike, a guy who won't let a tumor get in the way of mayhem. We hooked up with a posse of Austin legends, Dave Parrick, James "Sheps" Shepard, and Ruben "The Cuban" Castillo. Rick Thorne was with us too. That night Spike climbed a rain gutter up to the roof of a nightclub and infiltrated the interior, saving himself the three dollar cover charge. Within fifteen minutes of entering, Spike's personality was infecting the dance floor, causing an adverse reaction from some phony Euro-snob wearing a ponytail and a white turtleneck in the ninety degree heat. Euro was highly annoyed that Spike was having fun too near him, which made Spike even more pleased to cramp the guy's style. Before long, Euro erupted, challenging Spike to a two-fisted throwdown. Spike tried to diffuse the human stress bomb by giving the guy a bear hug, then licked his face from chin to forehead in one quick motion. The instant before Euro decked Spike, out of the darkness came the rescue squad—Rick, Ruben, Dave, and James. They each clocked the guy in the head with a rapid fire punch, perfectly timed to the electronic beats pounding from the sound system. We were thrown out.

Number 5: Rotator Cuff Rip Off

January, 1991. I hadn't done a one-footed 540 in weeks, when I tried spinning one. I held back a little and did it low. I crashed and landed with my right arm fully extended to break my fall. The impact ripped my rotator cuff, the

group of four muscles that lay over your shoulder socket, which keep your arm in place and help it rotate. Mine was wrecked.

The irony was I'd hurt myself because I was holding back, to avoid hurting myself. My whole arm stung with electrified hellfire, but it stayed in its socket and didn't feel like I'd broken anything. The day after the slam, I was scheduled to do some demos in Australia with Mark "Gator" Anthony, Brian Blyther, and Chris Miller. My shoulder ached super bad, but I iced it every night. From Australia I flew directly to the King of Vert contest at Thrasherland in Arizona. During the pro finals, I got a flat at the end of my second run. I borrowed the nearest bike I could find, and dropped in. I had to literally hold on and hoped it responded to what I wanted it to do, which was a flip fakie. I almost pulled it, but the bike felt alien, and the seat post was so low, I had to stand up on the roll back. I bit off a little more than I could chew, and paid for it with another slam. My rotator cuff tore some more. But, I won the comp and the 1990 Pro of the Year title.

I got home from the Arizona contest and had to get the hardware (ten screws and a plate) removed from my leg because the bone had grown over it. I was still growing and it was going to affect the growth of my leg, so they had to go back in and chisel it out. The upside was, I would only have to take about a week or two off before I could ride again. I asked Dr. Yates if he could take a look at my shoulder during the operation because it had been aching. I woke up with a big puffy incision on my right arm and a shoulder immobilizer on it. Dr. Yates came in and said I had immensely torn my rotator cuff, and I was looking at four-month recovery. **Shit!** I didn't expect that.

That one-footed 540 injury made me realize my pain tolerance was getting pretty strong, and even if I could handle the pain it didn't mean something wasn't seriously wrong. It was also the gateway to serious rotator cuff problems, which plague me to this day. Every time I put my arm out when I slam, it tears my rotator cuff. All because I held back on that trick.

The incident convinced me to never try anything half-assed again.

Number 6: Arm Harm

October, 1992. During the summer I took a bad slam on my elbow. I never got it checked, and didn't know I'd chipped off part of the bone. The bone spur healed in the joint, and before long I couldn't bend my elbow enough to brush my teeth, brush my hair, or shave. I'm right handed, and had to learn all those tasks using my left arm. It sounds simple, but it's not. That was my mentality at the time—I'd modify my life around injuries, as long as it didn't interfere with my riding. I was getting accustomed to my unbendable elbow by the time I went to the Rider Cup in England, in October. A good day of riding came to a halt when I hung up doing a flair. I stiff-armed into the flat bottom with my right arm extended and hit my head on the top of my arm so hard I knocked



A SIMPLE FRACTURE DOES NOT PIERCE THROUGH THE SKIN. IF IT IS NOT CARED FOR PROPERLY, IT COULD BECOME A COMPOUND FRACTURE.

IF A FRACTURE IS SUSPECTED...

1. CHECK FOR SWELLING AROUND THE AFFECTED AREA

2. THERE MAY BE DISCOLORATION OF THE SKIN IF THE VICTIM COMPLAINS OF TENDERNESS AND PAIN IN THE AREA OR SAYS THAT HE FELT OR HEARD A BONE SNAP. SEE A DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY.

A COMPOUND FRACTURE PIERCES THROUGH THE SKIN. SERIOUS BLEEDING MAY OCCUR WITH THIS KIND OF WOUND. DO NOT APPLY PRESSURE TO A COMPOUND FRACTURE TO STOP THE BLEEDING.

WHAT TO DO FOR A COMPOUND FRACTURE:

1. COVER THE INJURED PART WITH A STERILE PAD

2. APPLY A SPLINT TO KEEP THE BONE FROM CAUSING FURTHER INJURY TO THE SURROUNDING TISSUES

3. WAIT FOR MEDICAL HELP

4. AVOID MOVING THE VICTIM, BUT KEEP HIM WARM, COMFORTABLE, AND REASSURED.

A SPLINT CAN BE CORRUGATED CARDBOARD, FOLDED NEWSPAPERS, BOARDS, STRAIGHT STICKS, OR A ROLLED-UP BLANKET. A SPLINT HELPS PROTECT THE INJURY UNTIL HELP ARRIVES. THE SPLINT SHOULD BE LONG ENOUGH TO EXTEND BEYOND THE JOINTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FRACTURE.

HOW TO APPLY THE SPLINT:

1. USE STRIPS OF CLOTH, HANDEKERCHES, TIES, OR BELTS TO HOLD THE SPLINT IN PLACE. BE SURE NOT TO SECURE THE SPLINT SO TIGHTLY THAT IT CAUSES POOR CIRCULATION BELOW THE WOUND.

FOR ARM FRACTURES:

1. APPLY A SPLINT

2. USE A LARGE, TRIANGULAR BANDAGE TO MAKE A SLING TO PREVENT THE ARM FROM MOVING.

ONCE A SPLINT HAS BEEN APPLIED TO A FRACTURE, CAREFULLY ELEVATE THE WOUNDED AREA TO SLOW BLOOD-FLOW TO THE WOUND. FOR A COMPOUND FRACTURE,

CONTROL BLEEDING BY HOLDING A CLEAN CLOTH ON THE WOUND BEFORE APPLYING A SPLINT. PRESSURE SHOULD BE AVOIDED TO PREVENT THE BONE FROM SPLINTERING AND CAUSING MORE DAMAGE TO SURROUNDING TISSUES.



continued on page 28

{ spike jonze }



{ mike castillo }



"IF YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE ALL THE PLEASURE AND SUCCESS OF LIFE, YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO ENDURE ALL THE PAIN AND FAILURES. I WANT TO EXPERIENCE EVERYTHING."

CONTORTED CANDY BAR CAN-CAN OVER A MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO CIRCA 1989.

myself out, ripping my rotator cuff again and worse. The slam put me in so much pain so fast that I knew I'd done something very bad to my body. It was a long, sore flight home. When I got back to the United States I immediately went to Dr. Yates for surgery. I asked him to check out my elbow while he was in my shoulder—two birds, one stone. I woke up with an immobilized elbow that hurt worst then my shoulder. It was a tough surgery. In the video of the arthroscopic portion of the surgery, there are a bunch of tools stuck deep into my arm and Dr. Yates says, "I'll be filleting your elbow

now." I didn't expect it, but it took a lot of therapy and time before my elbow would bend again.

It works fine now, and I'm back to shaving right-handed.

Number 7: Air to Spleen

April, 1993. It started when I built a 21 foot tall quarterpipe (about twice the height of a normal vert ramp) and convinced my partner Steve to tow me at 50mph on a motorcycle down a plywood runway. I'd let go of the tow rope, grab my handlebars, and shoot out of the ramp 18, 19, 20 feet and more. Within

the first session, I'd broken the world record (my own), easy. The ramp was taller than a telephone pole, so add the aerial height, and I was about four stories off the ground during my peak. The power of the forces at work made themselves apparent one day when I hung up my back wheel on re-entry from 21 feet out. I was going so fast when I clipped the coping, it ripped the tire off my wheel and wrecked my rim. I didn't get hurt, but it opened my eyes up to the speed we were dealing with. Eventually it became such an ordeal to use the motorcycle tow rope to ride the big ramp that I convert-

ed the giant quarterpipe into a giant halfpipe—with two transitions, my plan was to pump it under my own power. I built a 46 foot tall roll-in off the top of our warehouse to send me into the ramp. But the giant trannies proved to be too much to maintain speed, and my airs would start at 19 feet and get lower and lower with each wall.

I wanted to ride the halfpipe and sky out of it. I reverse-engineered a weedeater engine and rigged it to my bike. I duct taped on a gas tank, and used a 122-tooth sprocket to drive my rear wheel. Then I'd rev the tiny engine



HOFFMAN UNDER THE DECK OF HIS WAREHOUSE HALF-PIPE AMIDST A GRAVEYARD OF BROKEN BIKE PARTS, WHICH HE PERSONALLY DESTROYED. AT ONE POINT HE WENT THROUGH THREE BRAND NEW BIKES A DAY. AFTER EQUIPMENT FAILURE PUT HIM IN A COMA, HE STARTED HOFFMAN BIKES IN 1991 AND BEGAN MANUFACTURING BOMBPROOF TOOLS OF HIS TRADE.



15 YEARS OLD AND WOWING THE CROWD WITH A NO-HANDER ONE-FOOTER DURING A DEMO AT ROCKVILLE BMX. SOMEWHERE IN THE CROWD ARE TEENAGED ROCKVILLE BMX EMPLOYEES AND FUTURE FILM DIRECTORS, SPIKE JONZE AND JEFF TREMAINE. CAN YOU SPOT THEM? CONTEST DETAILS ON WEBSITE.

life against dementia

why mass culture sucks, by joe carducci.

{ camille rose garcia }



“who’s afraid of the peppermint man”

Anyone familiar with the roiling currents and tidal motion of American popular culture knows that the film and music industries are delivering less interesting work than ever. Melodies, rhythms, songs, voices, characters, stories and genres seem colder, more processed and, in general, received rather than inspired. There’s nothing wrong with referencing or even stealing plots or melodies as long as the stealing’s done by an artist or madman who revives them too, in some new personal way. But with the explosion of University film departments and rock ‘n’ roll courses in the last two decades the American arts are filling up with professional careerists who better belong in business college or law school.

The action film fell of its own overblown weight; you’d hardly know that it grew from such lean, tightly-scripted productions as *Dirty Harry* (1971), *Death Wish* (1974), *Rocky* (1976), *First Blood* (1982), and *Terminator* (1984). And whereas *Jaws* (1975) remade film marketing, *Titanic* (1997) threatened to remake the action film itself: fusing the male action film with the woman’s film takes another

hundred million dollars and an additional hour in running time. The resulting summer behemoths trod the marketplace with such strong-arming confidence that the studios practically demand they be made without costly stars so as to pack in more explosives and effects and advertising.

The music industry’s dilemma was clear at this year’s Grammys. In a normal year Michael Greene, president of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS), would have slammed Republicans on non-Industry social policy grounds, but Bush got off easy this year as the country ain’t in the mood and Greene’s house was not in order. Big recording stars are lobbying in Sacramento to void the record industry’s exemption from the seven-year personal contract limit, and they want to own their own master recordings. And over all the bogus proceedings on Grammy night loomed the specter of the computer-software-hardware-Internet juggernaut’s paramount killer app—free music. (NARAS is no longer Greene’s playpen due to sexual harassment lawsuit—a real Clinton Democrat, apparently.)

So the questions become:

Have the media, which now dominate content, so divided programming into blindered marketing niches that they’ve cut the cords to our rich musical and film traditions?

—Has the evolution of Pop—its computer-generated virtual musics and films—superseded any organic folk motion within our music and film traditions? —Has the Organization Man of International Entertainment corporate culture proved incapable of recognizing and delivering music and film of the level that sundry Sammy Glicks and jukebox mobsters did for decades in their sleep?

—Has the music underground rejected all tradition but either the line of nihilism diagrammed by Greil Marcus in *Lipstick Traces*, or a backstop of kitsch (such vicarious ex-pat pursuits as French chanson, Exotica, Canto-Pop, J-pop...)?

Sorry I asked...

We can’t be sure whether the current thin gruel might not be the only possible art deduced from the slim pickings of the last nearly 30 years. The teenagers just starting their bands and the twenty-

somethings still prepping their first film will be the artists shaping what American pop culture will become. But they have experienced pop culture of little depth or personality their entire lives. What humanity persists in the art tends to be negative, reactionary traits: cynicism, indifference, contempt....

Radio was formatted in the early ‘70s and so ambitious recording artists quickly began to format themselves. Consequently, an entire generation of willful rock bands – Ramones through Flipper – refused to format themselves. These were the last bands to have grown up listening to the cultural mix of pre-1973 radio and TV variety shows (not to mention having walked through the high grade “amateur” musical environment Americans of all ages once experienced at county fairs, corn-boils, church socials and school dances). But unformatted, these punk bands were then not programmed. Those that attempted to format themselves for hits (Talking Heads, Devo, X, Replacements...) ensured they would not be the bands that carried the torch forward; perversely, it would be the unprogrammed misses (Ramones, Avengers, Black

Flag, Minutemen, Descendents...) that would launch a million bands.

Since the music left the South in the late '50s the natural grace of that early rock 'n' roll has gradually dimmed, leaving a more studied rock music in its place. The British bands of the decade between 1963 and 1973 had studied the music, though you couldn't say they were grounded in it. The American punk bands that formed before 1980 were the last to be grounded in this folk tradition aspect of rock 'n' roll (though they were warped as well by that new Brit influence). Thereafter, even the most important bands (Sonic Youth, Nirvana, Tool, Kyuss/Queens of the Stone Age, White Stripes...) are necessarily more conceptual in approach. It may be that our distance from the South of that day, and the input from today's constricted media-driven musical environment, might ultimately dry up the musicality of even bands that do not depend on the programmers of radio and MTV.

Hollywood today, courtesy of marketing science and Sammy Glick IV, offers CGI (computer-generated imaging) Potemkin villages and villagers for pulverizing in CGI thermidor for the boys, tearjerking emo-porn for girls and nihilistic puzzle pictures for the sophistos. Generations of filmmakers have been destroyed by the *Star Wars* saga with nary a wobble in the force detected. (In my unrequited meetings with film producers in L.A. and N.Y., the life-size Star Trooper models in the office corners never relax their guard.) More noxious influences on film narratives are tramping in from TV, music videos, advertising, videogames, pornography and all the film deconstruction bonuses included on the typical DVD release.

Recently passing on through the obit pages have been American cultural figures such as Peggy Lee, Budd Boetticher, Joey and Dee Dee Ramone, Dave Van Ronk, Pop Staples, Katy Jurado, Ray Brown, Anthony Quinn, Waylon Jennings, Dorothy MacGuire, Harlan Howard, John Lee Hooker, Richard Farnsworth, Bernard Klatzko, Carl Perkins, Ed Roth, Hilous Butrum, Rod Steiger, Otis Blackwell and John Fahey. Never mind the heftlessness of the obits in decades to come, Britney Spears may never die! The biotech nerds (not known for their ability to hear music) are forging new frontiers in unintended consequences.

Our meta-sentient pop culture has foreshadowed this immortality. The explosion of cultural choices via cable and satellite has reached critical mass via the web — it's now become something different, a constant ambient hemorrhagic din. Kids watch *Ozzie and Harriet* and *The Osbournes*; Randolph Scott rides again; Buster Keaton falls down and springs up again; and even the sword-and-sandal genre returns! We are either jacked by contemporary offerings (*Survivor*, *Cops*, *Robot Wars*, *Dismissed*...) or calmed by our immortal ghost culture (Lawrence Welk, Audie Murphy, *Cheyenne*, *Father Knows Best*...).

While it is true that a musical/societal syncretism such as Elvis Presley can never be repeated, it is also true that there are no longer coherent pop and social cultures from which a given Elvis might be launched from and against. The '50s pop consensus was bisected first by generation (Frank v. Elvis), then by gender (Eastwood v. Redford/Welch v. Streisand), and then

chopped into smaller and smaller fragments (Russ Meyer, Roger Corman, R. Crumb, splatter films, death metal, lesbian romances, the Olsen twins, post-rock, abasement comedies, Daniel Johnston, Dolomite...). Instead of backwater geniuses being shuttled into the media spotlight for the benefit of a sincerely interested audience, the media turns its spotlight onto itself, in effect, for the amusement of a fallen, cynical audience. There was one Elvis; there are millions of Kim Fowleys. People lived vicariously through Elvis in that small part of their grounded lives they reserved for dreams. Today, American work-lives generally require no physical labor and this has loosed us to live in a veritable dreamland. And one can only laugh at a Kim Fowley as he chases his weightless dream.

The advertising industry runs on applied schizophrenia; its hacks work not to express themselves or even their clients, but to anticipate and produce what their potential customers might wish to hear, all the while serving their clients' interests. It's this wheedling Madison Avenue energy, not just its money, which fuels the media and increasingly the art itself. If there are great garage-styled bands now attempting to get heard on radio and cable, why is it we've been hearing garage-style in major ad campaigns for the Gap (Troggs), Powerade (Monks), Pepsi (Sam the Sham) and others for a year or more? Clearly there are sharper and more desperate minds in advertising than in programming. Still, you'd think

TODAY, AMERICAN WORK-LIVES GENERALLY REQUIRE NO PHYSICAL LABOR AND THIS HAS LOOSED US TO LIVE IN A VERITABLE DREAMLAND.

that advertisers would be the most concerned about tune-out factor, as listeners are already predisposed to bail to another station when the ads kick in—this is a measure of just how retarded programmers have become.

An energy with a similarly desperate kick shoots prospective talismans of the zeitgeist, such as *The Osbournes* and mullet haircuts, through an increasingly dim popular culture and before the even dumber cultures of media, politics and the academy whose leading cement-heads can always be counted on to belabor the slightest of pop culture throw-aways. We first saw this kind of mass impulse after Elvis' death when his name and image became punchlines. The late-Elvis talisman continues to ward off the fear of being caught uncool and naive—it's a default setting for the subhip. This double-dealing desperation to trump the hip has leaked into pop culture from advertising.

Still, the gravitational pull of the marketplace and individual artistic consciousness tugs at notions from all these cultural shards and remakes of them something akin to the old A-film or hit record that once offered something for men and women, girls and boys, hipsters and squares (Then, full-throated: John Ford, the Beatles, George Stevens, Led Zeppelin; Now, sotto voce: Steven Spielberg, No Doubt, Steven Soderbergh, Weezer).

Refusal to grow up was very nearly the defining characteristic of the boomers, so it's no surprise they might refuse to die. Their pop culture likewise appears immutable. Kids and young

adults—those born in the '70s and '80s—have been keeping inherited styles like Hippie, Radical, Soul, Folkie, Beat and Bop alive. Alternatives such as Punk, Metal, Garage, and Rap date back to very nearly the same period. But their mere survival does not make them vital. They each now exhibit the dementia of a played-out mind, no matter the condition of the body. And in youth-culture terms, when a style will not die, then the hollow posturing of the neo-neophytes within it tends to foreclose the use of that style's original statements by any ambitious musician seeking to create something new informed by the best of the past—this past the only possible source of ammunition to fight a sterile present. So, while the emptied forms of these styles thrive (think reggae, punk, metal, blues, jazz, you name it), vital young musicians are discouraged from rooting themselves in these traditions because their high school nemeses are camped out within them. Again, this matters because these young players' music will soon be what we all have to listen to. Garage might have been predicted as the most viable option to revive because, though it's been bubbling under in collector/retro-pop circles forever, it's been absent in the high school social universe.

The slow organic rise of neo-country since the '80s (Blasters, Panther Burns, Gun Club, Jason and the Scorchers, Souled American...), to the point that it has become a sturdy parallel economy, augurs better for a musically rooted rev-

olution today. Commercial C&W radio is as utterly irrelevant to this underground as commercial rock radio was to the Ramones 25 years ago; this can be a good thing if you're patient enough to wait for Nirvana. The garage underground is probably more reactionary than the country underground. It's an old scene that often cleaves to bad formless junk because it betrays no trace of pop, metal, punk or whatever gets their goat and so can't sell out to anybody and embarrass them. Luckily it has a great fanzine voice in *Ugly Things*, and the scene's arbiters appear to be losing control of bands that deserve a wide audience, in the same way that the Gilman Street commandants lost control of Green Day. The Fat Possum label roiled today's well-oiled blues industry simply by trolling the delta for 70- and 80-year-old bluesmen—the last of their genus, sadly. The city sophisticates of the blues didn't immediately cotton to these rural eccentrics (R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, T-Model Ford...); that's how far from musical truth even music obsessives can drift when a subculture's weakness inspires defensiveness.

Hollywood's dilemma is different. Filmmaking is capital-intensive and is art-by-committee of nominal adults. The old studio system was crippled by the Supreme Court's 1948 Paramount decision that forced the divestiture of the studios' theater chains. Then it was destroyed by the growth of television, and its history rewritten via the Auteur theory, which re-evaluated throwaway B-films at the expense of fussed-over A-

films. It took until the end of the '60s for new production and aesthetic equilibriums to be reached. The unexpected successes of Sergio Leone's westerns (released in U.S. 1967-8), and *Easy Rider* (1969) woke Hollywood up. But too soon after that, the pulpy seventies small film (*The Hired Hand*, *Two-Lane Blacktop*, *Badlands*, *Night Moves*, *Rancho Deluxe*...) had morphed into a comicy template hammered out by *Rocky*, *Jaws* and *Star Wars* (1977). The human-scale satisfactions offered by time-honored Hollywood B genres were soon inflated with A budgets and A stars to the point at which second unit directors, stunt coordinators and CGI designers have become crypto-auteurs (*Jurassic Park*, *Independence Day*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Minority Report*...), when in fact, there need be no actual auteur of any script. Here, too, it may be that the films offered for two decades now have corroded filmmakers' ability to deliver, and audiences' ability to demand better work.

The auteur theory seduced the independent film world from the start. Here, where the screenwriter's contribution might've carried more weight, young directors succumb to a false imperative to direct and write their films, a la Bergman. But without a true writer's sense of tragedy or comedy, these writer-directors (Tarantino, Smith, Jonze) are left with little but their own fandom impulses to display personal cult bona fides. Others simply puzzle up their narratives (*Mulholland Drive*, *Memento*, *Exotica!*...), using alleged formal innovation to disguise lack of content. Hollywood is a long, long way from Henry Hathaway, Henry King, Jacques Tourneur, Joseph H. Lewis, Don Siegel, Anthony Mann, ad infinitum....

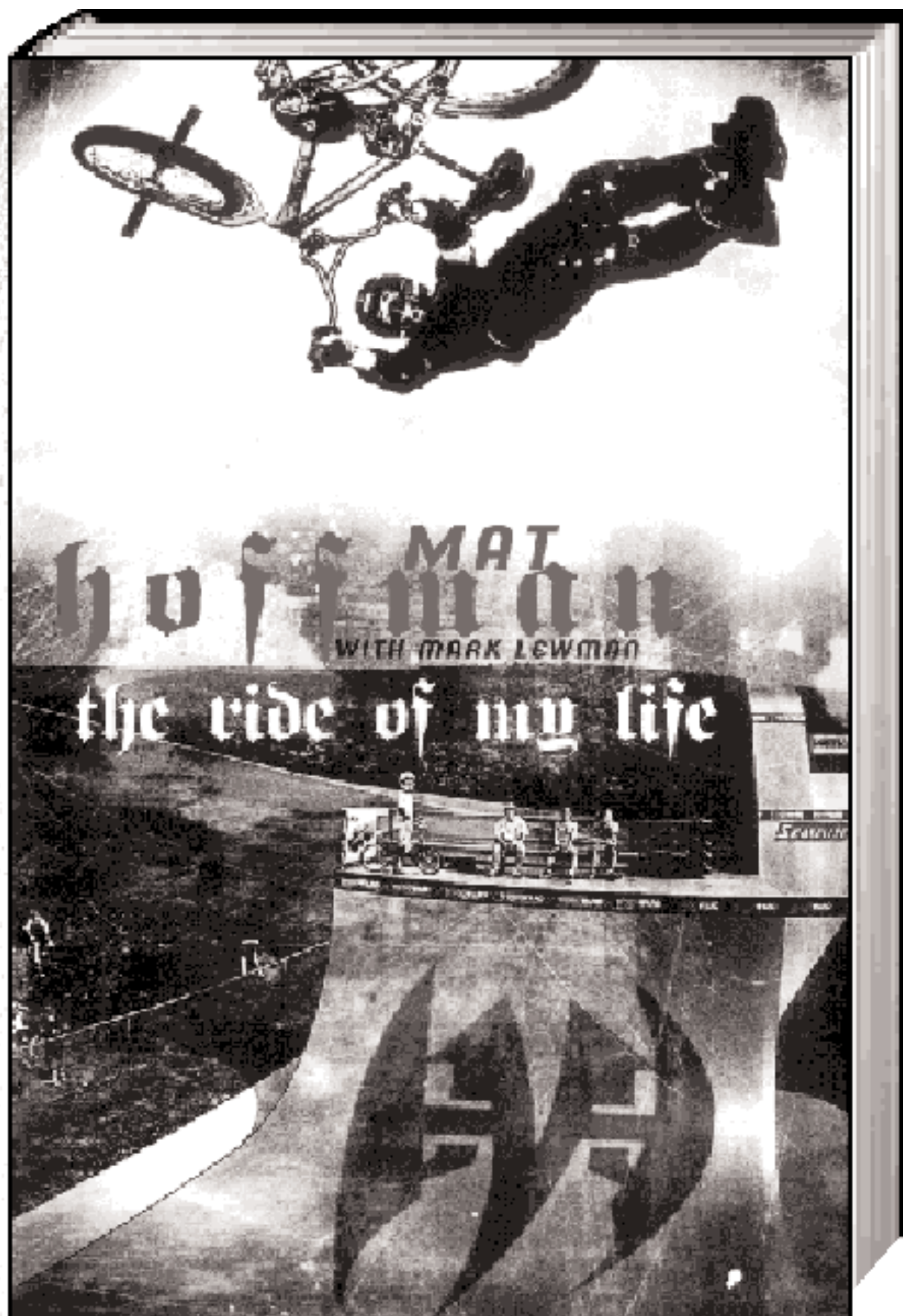
What is there left in this culture that can be built upon? Who is there to build it? I'm glad you asked.

Today a kid is drafted into extracurricular activities by boomer parents who can't stand the idea of letting him or her roam around in this world that they made. After WWII, when the sexes got back together and everyone was having kids, American culture was kid-friendly. You rode your bike anywhere you wanted to, so long as you got home by dinner. Other adults, parents themselves, would look out for you if you got near trouble. Now with parent or parents working, a kid's time is booked up to keep him occupied and supervised until evening. Individual sports are becoming more common than team sports for boys, while girls are now pushed into team sports courtesy the Title IX diktat (volleyball scholarships crowd out wrestling budgets).

The web, television, videogames and cell-phones are ubiquitous, and the post-scarcity fast-food obesity apocalypse is accommodated by the skate/hip-hop fashion world of XXXXL sizes and the faux-biker pseud-culture of tattooed tubboes with fu manchus. In early '90s NBA-style, the older players hid balding pates by shaving their heads and bluffed the rookies into shaving off their own full heads of hair. The NBA young eventually turned the tables. There are always style options for a new youth culture, though even I hesitate to observe that hot pants and afros are the most obvious one for the NBA (sure enough, Madison Avenue's there already). Today, MTV's music videos are larded with the fantasies of fat rappers, while its reality shows are stocked


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with the ripped abs and bared midribs of model American youth. (These does never show you the 300 stomach crunches a day these poor desperate bastards perform. That might be too real, like a Warhol film.)

Boys skate, game or surf the web for porn; girls play soccer or politic amongst themselves. There's plenty of fan interest in music and film but it has been failing to develop beyond simple consumer response or artless careerism. The sex roles that rise from skate culture, hip-hop, videogames, girl-world, *Maxim*, Victoria's Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch and MTV are the mook and the model, or the player and the whore. Girls may get something out of these roles, but at base they float the male fantasy that the dude-as-slob can get the hot chick in heels. This is culture, not life of course, but where might a youth-style go from here? The rainbow tribe bubbleheads occupy the more naturally androgynous hippie option, the snobs are still wearing black and even cheerleaders have tattoos.

There will be some new equilibrium that settles around these challenges to the classic cultural venues from the web, videogames and corporate oversell but it can't be seen yet. But one can see already that the mass markets, the passive ubiquity of the web and the aggressive ubiquity of the cell phone has prompted a localist reaction that champions artisanship, literature, homemade culture and lost media like 78 Victrolas, PXL-2000 cameras and 8-track cartridges. Females are still evolving under new pressures and opportunities. When sex, the orb around which the female psyche's one abiding question revolves, is decoupled from reproduction, as it has been since the pill was introduced in 1960, then new things begin to happen:

- 1) That existential question shatters into dozens of leading questionlets about mere sucking and fucking, fueled now with venal status-seeking consumer agitation,
- 2) Girls' behavior to each other gets more contentious, and this anxiety might be expected to prove better for art than the traditional female code, or more recent willed solidarities,
- 3) And fashion, once mere social coloration, becomes instead an index of this new hysteria. When such hysterical energy is ideologized, as most everything is in this world of college grads, female artists are wont to overshoot their mark yielding work that loudly postures politically but won't declare its art. (Art is not a hammer; a hammer is a hammer.)

Male culture seems to be either in denial about its nature (Emo, Pagan, Rave) or wallowing in it (the rest of 'em). New options for females tend to allow males to sink into their worst impulses (see ghetto social breakdown or *Maxim* for this in extremis). Only the male board-sport culture seems to be creative within this confusion. After the U.S. team swept the Olympic Halfpipe event, silver medalist Danny Kass was breathlessly prompted by NBC to describe what he expected from his moment on the podium, and he responded with pitch-perfect new-male bravado, "I guess I'll try to cry."

Women's tennis might be the most interesting female subculture at the moment. Beginning with Martina Hingis, it's burst into a new upgrade. The Williams sisters are plenty girlish, even as they unload a wild new power onto the game. Those following are less flamboyant and all business for this new game having been secured. (The soft-

focus Kournikova game never arrived.) Women's figure skating is too trapped inside its aestheticized erotic fantasy world to break out into anything new (back-flips, etc., are illegal). Reigning billiards champ Jeanette Lee is literally the Frida Kahlo of the pool table and therefore, unfortunately, probably too like a forbidding Pain Goddess to become a standard for young girls. The young black women lately raging through MTV's reality programming (*Real World*, *Road Rules*) may mean more than Richter scale abuse, or maybe it's just racist misogyny at MTV.

But the young must work in and around a male dementia of beer ads, *Jackass*, Emo, Metal, Anime, WWF, games, gangsta rap, Hefner, Guccione and Flynt, and a female dementia of Alanis Morissette, Mariah, Melissa Etheridge, Enya, Eve Ensler, Louise Erdrich, Lifetime, Le Tigre, and *Sex in the City*. And so many of the young attend college now that urban bohemia no longer collect idiosyncratic rule-breaking drop-outs, so much as they endure annual graduating classes of operators who have already interned halfway up the bowels of the Man. Recent American low-rent drop-out bohemia in Williamsburg, the Lower East Side, Wicker Park, Silver Lake and the Mission were set upon and con-

sumed by dot.com yuppies, design students, starter execs and trust-fund babies as if by swarms of locusts.

We can cheer ourselves by supposing that the worse it all gets, the greater the opportunity for some 21st Century Elvis. But can these rookies hit the efus pitch? When Norman O. Brown wrote *Life Against Death* in the '50s he was trying to redeem the narrow protocols of Marx and philosophy by insisting they contend with Freud. This he did under the pressure of an American culture unnaturally coherent due to the collective effects of the Depression and the war. But with the sudden demobilization that followed WWII we got a real revolution, though it did not come wearing the clothes that frustrated intellectuals expected. The GI Bill (1944) began the destruction of in loco parentis discipline at colleges via the horde of smoking-fucking-killing jarheads come to learn, and the boom in suburban life began to let the air out of

the old urban tribal patterns. Brown's book remains important, but today his subtext of sexual frustration is of course dated. His End of Repression that frees Life to become as Play, became co-ed Hillary's search for more ecstatic modes of living and Charles Manson's free-love/creepy crawl a long time ago. Today we stand in the ruins of real existing liberation, where, as Camille Paglia has noted, regression rather than repression seems the greater threat. Postwar academic rebels took one look at Stalin and turned inward. They sought to rationalize and neuter sex so as to have a lot of it. So now an ideologized school nurse pushes safe sex to sixth graders. A century after Gauguin, radicals still dream of an escape from Judeo-Christian strictures. Instead they merely laid groundwork for the thorough commercialization of now decontextualized sex in popular culture. Because, of course, to the trusty teenage mind (the male one anyway) this all translates as porn and blowjobs all around! And there was nothing, *nothing*, Madison Avenue more desired than the cultural license to jack directly into the factory-wired Pavlovian sex drive of its subjects.

The young remain victims of a dementia locked into our culture by the continuing demographic power of

the baby boom. Brown was not entirely wrong, but his subtle turn was bested in the real world of the '60s boomers by scoundrels like Margaret Mead and Alfred Kinsey. These two have recently been unmasked as having, in the main, simply projected their own sexual self-loathing out onto the naturally occurring social equilibrium of the less pretentious—those de-mobed out of war into adulthood who raised the many children of this baby boom out of a kind of inspired relief that the killing was over. Mead and Kinsey, et al. would catch the zeitgeist of these children—a new class, one insulated from the imperatives of war and privation, but lost in an accelerating virtual world of pop culture and pop philosophy, and looking for a new criteria in which to best their parents (today all but officially referred to as "The Greatest Generation").

Much was wrecked, but the radicals still lost because American culture is a moving target; it is alive, reparative and evolving. In a richer musical culture, teenagers in their garages cooked up amazing music. Today, it's more likely to take twenty-somethings to have a shot at that. But that was the case 25 years ago with punk rock too, despite all its romantic talk of the Kids. For film, the low overhead of a home computer, postproduction and the proliferation of cable and satellite outlets—plus Internet dispersion—bodes well for a renaissance. And DV has already opened up the film festival snobs to video productions they'd have rejected out of hand just five years ago.

Radio and the major record labels ignored punk when the Ramones began in the mid-'70s and throughout the '80s. Nirvana's breakthrough in 1991 was in no small part due to the arrival in Hollywood of Sony, BMG and Matsushita—foreign capital and personnel from smaller national markets that had long made popular successes of American as well as British punk music. Today, after decades of corporate consolidation, the market seems to be saying we're due for a period of divestment, if not actual trust-busting. (AOL bought Time-Warner just a year and a half ago, and now separated out, AOL's market value is less than zero.) If the markets and/or

feds turn on these culture cartels (AOL/Time-Warner, Vivendi Universal, Disney-ABC, Viacom-CBS, News Corp-Fox, Sony, and Bertelsmann) it won't be pretty; it'll be beautiful. The radio/concert promotions behemoth Clear Channel SFX is the likely first target of any government action. They have more clout and fewer friends. (AOL/Time-Warner, Vivendi-Universal, Bertelsmann and Clear Channel-SFX have each ousted a COO, CEO or Chairman recently.) The market is squeezing waste from the bloated entertainment sector, and man, ain't there a lot of it! This squeeze is from all directions: from shareholders to pirates, from the web to the war, from artists' demands to audience rejection. The revenue effects of format revolutions (CD, video, DVD, cable, satellites) and a mini-baby boom which juiced the teen pop and teen film markets led to outsized profit expectations which amplify the present despair. There is probably one more format change left for both film and music before it's all delivered by wire or satellite. From that point the economics will be more easily rationalized: rewards paid out on merit after the fact, rather than in upfront advances, which lead to trying to make killings on new talent to pay for the bath they take on veteran talent (Mick Jagger, Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen...).

In the end, these corporations will have to radically restructure themselves to cut the costs of developing, producing and delivering music and film. The large corporations that bought into Hollywood over the last 20 years have made half-hearted attempts before, but that was about debt service after the purchase. Now it's about survival: whether Wall Street judges the entertainment industry as something worth holding. And money moves faster than ever. Wall Street's (and Bakunin's) "creative destruction" never sounded more rockin'! Any resulting opening of the culture structures will beg for new musicians and filmmakers with better to offer. We'll then know if we still have it in us. ☺

BOYS SKATE, GAME OR SURF THE WEB FOR PORN; GIRLS PLAY SOCCER OR POLITIC AMONGST THEMSELVES.

sumed by dot.com yuppies, design students, starter execs and trust-fund babies as if by swarms of locusts.

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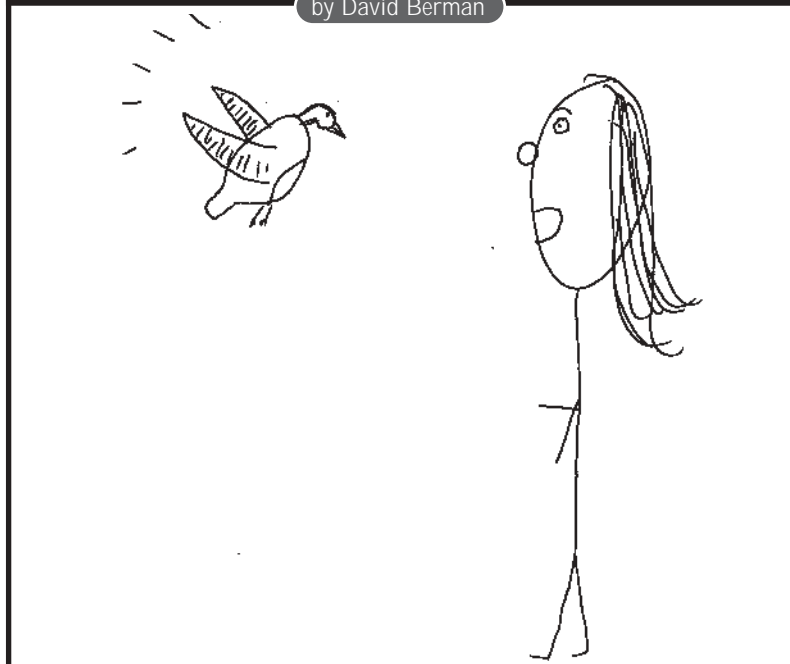
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Much was wrecked, but the radicals

Scenes from the First Y&S Tour

by David Berman



On acid in the dressing room.

fellowship of the vine

an interview with shamanic psychonaut—author daniel pinchbeck

Daniel Pinchbeck is a New York-based writer and journalist who co-founded the literary magazine *Open City* in the early '90s. The son of the writer Joyce Johnson (a member of the Beat Generation and author of *Minor Characters*) and the painter Peter Pinchbeck, Pinchbeck has been on a passionate intellectual quest for the last years that has taken him across Nepal, India, Mexico, the Amazon and West Africa, writing pieces on art, psychedelics, and altered states of consciousness for *Rolling Stone*, *The Village Voice*, *Wired*, *Salon*, and *The New York Times Magazine*, among others. His new book, *Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey Into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism* (Broadway), is an account of that quest, blending cultural history, personal narrative, and metaphysical speculation. The original interview was conducted by Joseph Durwin on the eve of *Breaking Open the Head's* publication; there's been some slight futzing of the text by *Arthur's* editor.

In your book, you talk about exploring many of the same hallucinogenic drugs—LSD, magic mushrooms, ayahuasca—that postwar Western bohemians like the Beats and the Hippies were interested in. How does your quest compare to those of people like William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary?

The Beats were working by instinct and intuition. They realized that modern society had become a horror show, and that their task was to begin to uncover, in Allen Ginsberg's words, "a lost knowledge or a lost consciousness." They took that process as far as they could in the context of their times and their individual personalities.

I believe that my approach—and my book—is more scientific and analytic, because that is the task of the "counterculture" in our time. Perhaps I am the only person who feels this way, but I see a clear goal ahead. This goal is a direct legacy of the counterculture—but it is actually hundreds, if not many thousands, of years older than that. In fact, it is the mission that we must somehow accomplish. Think of it as a secret raid to be carried out deep behind enemy lines, despite incredible odds, and with no possibility of failure.

The Beats and the Hippies saw through the abrasive insanity gnawing at the soul of America—this war-mongering, money-mad, climate-destroying monstrosity, which is now casting a dreadful shadow across the planet. Where the Beats acted intuitively, from the heart, we now have the necessary knowledge to put together a new paradigm that is simultaneously political, ecological, spiritual, and far more scientifically accurate than the outdated Newtonian-Darwinian model which is propping up the doom-spiraling status quo. The psychedelic experience supports the physicist David Bohm's vision of a "holographic universe," which is also identical to the alchemical perspective of "As above, so below." We now have the tools to reinstate the archaic cosmological perspective on a firm scientific basis. Once that sinks in, it becomes obvious that the true goal of human existence is psychic and spiritual development, and



the garden of magic; or, the powers and thrones approach the bridge

the entire thrust of the capitalist system is a samsaric delusion that is keeping humanity from recovering its birthright.

Perhaps there is a reason that humanity has been frantically seeking to develop a "global brain" through the Internet, cell phones and satellites: I suspect that a moment will come when complete social transformation becomes not only possible, but inevitable. That moment may be sooner than we think.

What were the circumstances that led to pursuing the experiences you relate in your book?

I first tried mushrooms and LSD in college—as many people do—and my experiences left me intrigued but puzzled. It seemed extraordinary that such vast alternative dimensions of consciousness could be revealed with such shocking immediacy. And it was equally extraordinary that the mainstream culture didn't find this a worthy subject of discussion or thought. After college, I put psychedelics aside to enter the "real world." When I hit my late twenties, I began to feel increasingly desolate and despairing. I was lucky enough to be connected to the New York media world, the art world and the literary world, but all these scenes began to seem unbearably empty to me. I realized that I needed to know for myself if there was a spiritual dimension to existence—I really thought that I might literally go insane or prefer to die without access to some form of deeper knowledge. I didn't think a bit of yoga was going to do the trick. At a bookstore, I heard about iboga, an African tribal psychedelic plant used in Gabon and the Congo that is said to show initiates the African spirit

world. Most people just take it once in their lives—it lasts for thirty hours. I got an assignment to go to Africa and go through the initiation, and that was where my quest began.

Did you have a religious upbringing?

I grew up as an atheist. Before writing my book, I thought the Bible was superstitious fakery and I despised any manifestation of organized Christianity. It is embarrassing to admit this, but I now suspect that Christ was exactly who he said he was, and the miracles described in the Gospels happened precisely as they are written. From my own experiences and the stories of the many people I interviewed, I know that "miracles"—violations of the known psychical laws—do in fact take place all the time. Christ could be viewed as a master shaman, seeing visions and dispensing healings. It is obvious, even if you just read the Gospel of Mark, that Christ's parables form an extraordinary esoteric teaching, which have love as their essence. For me, there is no more resonant statement today than Christ's comment from the Gnostic Gospels: "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you." At this time, when the world seems to be literally falling to pieces on many levels, we have an extraordinary opportunity to reclaim Christ's original message of love, brotherhood, and direct seeking of truth—no matter what the costs—from the perverted wreckage of official Christianity represented by Ashcroft, Bush and Scalia.

Is it necessary to go back to older, aboriginal traditions in order to

have truly breakthrough, shamanic (or spiritual) experiences with psychedelic mushrooms and other organic substances? What about the synthetic psychedelics like LSD, DMT and ketamine, which have no history of traditional use?

My thesis is that psychedelics actually do reveal other dimensions where there are other forms of beings existing in their own realms. We need to become savvy—eventually, even scientifically precise—about these other realms and develop a kind of protocol for dealing with

them. It is not generally the case that the beings we see on psychedelics have our best interests at heart. If we don't know what we are doing, they will try to make use of us in ways we do not really understand.

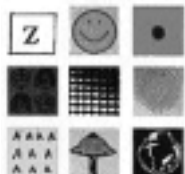
With natural compounds, there is at least a textual legacy to draw upon—you can go and find out how the Mazatecs or the Navajo used something and adapt their rituals if you want. You could also go and ask the shamans yourself. With new synthetic psychedelics, we don't even know what the rules should be, or what shamans of the past could tell us is going on when we take them. We are on our own, explorers in a new realm, and while that can be exciting it can also be terrifying. Also, many synthetic psychedelics are extremely dosage sensitive—a few milligrams can entirely change the quality of the experience. That makes them more difficult to use, and provokes more anxiety.

Ketamine is an interesting case. It has become very popular because it is physically relaxing and incredibly visionary. People who use ketamine can construct intricate universes for their own viewing pleasure. Yet ketamine tends to take an eerie hold over people. My sense is that ketamine is a drug that spiritually undermines the user and saps their will, while ayahuasca, especially taken in a traditional ceremony, makes you spiritually stronger. I believe that our society needs some spiritual warriors right now—not more numbed-out victims, ensnared by glamorous entities from the astral plane.

These substances are powerful tools. They are only used in tribal societies for very specific



daniel pinchbeck



A SHORT HISTORY OF LSD

LSD WAS FIRST SYNTHESIZED IN 1938 BY A CHEMIST WORKING FOR SANDOZ LABORATORIES IN SWITZERLAND. HIS NAME WAS DR. ALBERT HOFMANN. THERE IS A 'FOUNDATION' NAMED AFTER HIM AND MANY WEBSITES ARE DEDICATED TO HIM FOR INVENTING THIS DRUG, JUST AN FYI.

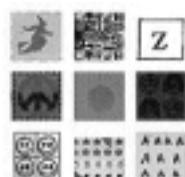
LSD WAS INITIALLY DEVELOPED AS A CIRCULATORY AND RESPIRATORY STIMULANT. HOWEVER, NO REAL BENEFITS OF THE COMPOUND WERE IDENTIFIED AND ITS STUDY WAS DISCONTINUED. IN THE 1940'S, INTEREST IN THE DRUG WAS REVIVED WHEN IT WAS THOUGHT TO BE A POSSIBLE TREATMENT FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA. BECAUSE OF LSD'S STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIP TO A CHEMICAL THAT IS PRESENT IN THE BRAIN AND ITS SIMILARITY IN EFFECT TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PSYCHOSIS, LSD WAS USED AS A RESEARCH TOOL IN STUDIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

SANDOZ LABORATORIES, THE DRUG'S SOLE PRODUCER, BEGAN MARKETING LSD IN 1947 UNDER THE TRADE NAME "DELYSID" AND IT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE UNITED STATES A YEAR LATER. SANDOZ MARKETING LSD AS A PSYCHIATRIC CURE-ALL AND HAILED IT AS A CURE FOR EVERYTHING FROM SCHIZOPHRENIA TO CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR, SEXUAL PERVERSIONS AND ALCOHOLISM. AND SANDOZ, IN ITS LSD RELATED LITERATURE SUGGESTED THAT PSYCHIATRISTS TAKE THE DRUG THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO "GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF THE SCHIZOPHRENIC."

DURING A 15 YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING IN 1950, RESEARCH ON LSD AND OTHER HALLUCINOGENS GENERATED OVER 1,000 SCIENTIFIC PAPERS, SEVERAL DOZEN BOOKS, AND 6 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, AND LSD WAS PRESCRIBED AS TREATMENT TO OVER 40,000 PATIENTS. ALTHOUGH INITIAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE BENEFITS OF LSD WERE HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC, EMPIRICAL DATA DEVELOPED SUBSEQUENTLY PROVED MUCH LESS PROMISING.

THE LATE TIMOTHY LEARY GAVE LSD ITS FAME AFTER BEING KICKED OUT FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY FOR USING STUDENTS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF LSD ON THE BRAIN. HE LATER BECAME AN ADVOCATE OF THE DRUG, PROMOTING ITS "MIND EXPANDING QUALITIES." LSD AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON IN THE 1960S AND 1970S HAS BEEN A SUBJECT FOR MUCH LITERATURE, SUCH AS TOM WOLFE'S "THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST".

DURING THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S, THE DRUG CULTURE ADOPTED LSD AS THE "PSYCHEDELIC" DRUG OF CHOICE. THE INFATUATION WITH LSD LASTED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS UNTIL CONSIDERABLE NEGATIVE PUBLICITY EMERGED ON "BAD TRIPS" -- PSYCHOTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LSD HIGH -- AND "FLASHBACKS", UNCONTROLLED RECURRING EXPERIENCES. AS A RESULT OF THESE REVELATIONS AND EFFECTIVE DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS, LSD DRAMATICALLY DECREASED IN POPULARITY IN THE MID-1970'S. SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF LSD CEASED AROUND 1980 AS RESEARCH FUNDING DECLINED.



purposes—usually for healing—and generally there are strict rules about how they should be employed. Mushrooms, for instance, are only consumed at night. If any Westerner persists in haphazard exploration, eventually they will be given a powerful demonstration of why these rituals exist—I certainly was. Because our culture has denied the existence of spiritual or demonic realms, we have no traditional knowledge to help us when things go wrong. Since it is hard for us to imagine that these other realms might be real, it is even harder to take them seriously—until we suddenly find ourselves playing for very high stakes indeed.

In your book, you describe your own shamanic initiation...

I found that I was undergoing some kind of process that seemed to be intensifying correspondences between psychic experiences and external events. For instance, the last night of my first visit to Burning Man, I sat for hours in front of a metal sculpture of a flaming heart. That night, I discovered later, my father had died of heart failure. A year later, I had just started editing a book on corporate globalization, oil and the environmental crisis on the morning of September 11, when I watched the World Trade Centers collapse from my window. The manuscript was already titled *World on Fire*. Second, I started to have constant dreams that suggested shamanic initiation—dreams of dismemberment and death, of myself being crucified by a cheering African tribe, or processed through some kind of cosmic sausage grinder. Third, after taking a powerful synthetic psychedelic, I found myself engaged in some kind of occult battle or contest with a disincarnate entity that lasted long after the trip—for several weeks in fact. This contest included poltergeist phenomena and other types of manifestation that I never would have believed were possible had I not experienced them myself. This particular substance also ushered me into the Western occult tradition, and since then I have been studying the Qabala and the Tarot, and becoming familiar with great visionary thinkers like Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjieff and Dion Fortune.

Is it simply a question of abandoning mainstream Western traditions then?

As modern Westerners, the painful fact is that we have to reckon with our Judeo-Christian heritage. We are in an interesting moment, as the three great monotheistic religions have been revealed as shams—Catholicism with its sex scandals, Judaism and Islam with their sanctioning of mass murder for political ends. It seems obvious that these institutions are spiritually bankrupt and morally bereft. Perhaps humanity has reached a point where these top-down structures have no more utility for us whatsoever.

When I finished my book, I started to study the Qabala. I found that some of my shamanic experiences corresponded exactly to different paths on the Tree of Life. For me,

this has become a valuable avenue for exploration. Aboriginal shamanism is the underpinning for all other esoteric systems. The basic model of the "World Tree"—with spirits and gods in the branches above, demons and ghosts tangled in the roots below—is universal. Built upon that foundation, we have the Eastern systems of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the Western occult tradition that runs from ancient Egypt and Israel through the medieval Qabalists and the Rosicrucians, up to Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjieff, Crowley and so on.

What about Eastern traditions?

Right now, Buddhism and Yoga are incredibly popular in the U.S. However, as systems of self-development, I wonder if they are ideal for Westerners. If you take the esoteric perspective that reincarnation is, in some sense, a fact, then if somebody has incarnated into a Western body, there must be a reason for that. Dion Fortune wrote that the West has a different dharma than the East: It is our dharma to conquer dense matter.

away and learn that the nature of mind is emptiness. However, I don't think that system works in the same way for contemporary Westerners, because we are already living right above the abyss. We need to discover there is something before we can realize there is nothing, if that makes any sense.

What about something like the Burning Man festival, which you mentioned earlier?

Burning Man is the postmodern continuation of those ancient festivals—it is a miraculous manifestation of the "Archaic Revival" described by Terence McKenna. On an occult level, I almost suspect that Burning Man is creating a model, on the astral plane, for how all human communities will have to exist in the future. How could the egalitarian, freedom-oriented, gift-centered, utopian form of Burning Man be implemented in a more permanent way, or on a larger scale? I have no clue.

How have the events detailed in your book changed your life?

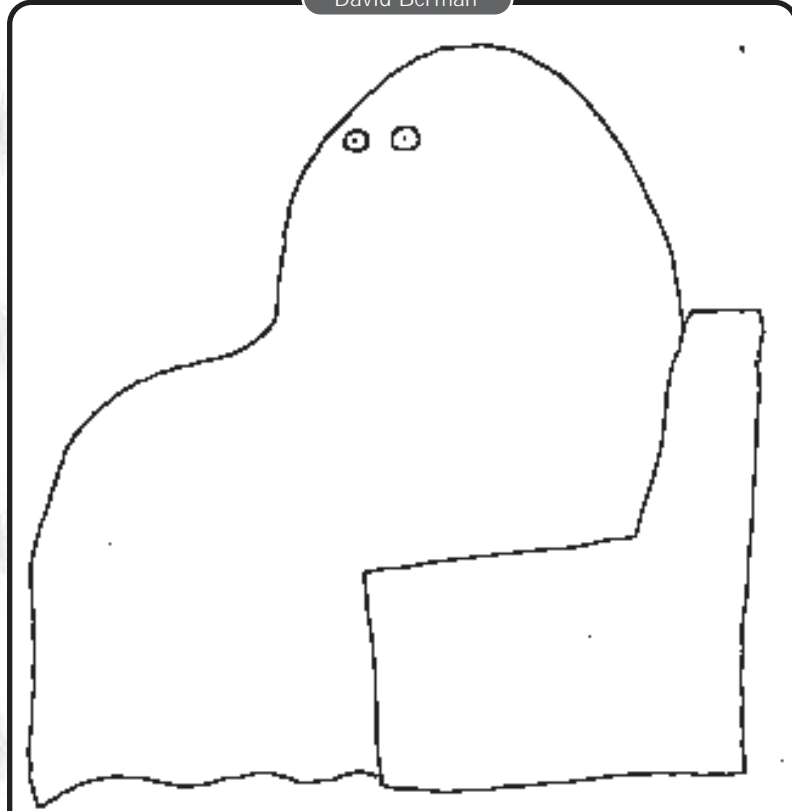
WE NEED TO DISCOVER THERE IS SOMETHING BEFORE WE CAN REALIZE THERE IS NOTHING, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

Rudolf Steiner thought that the transformation of the earth was part of the purpose of human evolution. What we need now is a Yoga or Tantra of social transformation, not more elaborate breathing exercises—not anything that will push us deeper into our obsession with our selves.

Tibetan Buddhism, with all of its beautiful pageants and ceremonies, was built around the revelation of emptiness. It must have struck like a thunderbolt, to be carefully initiated as a monk into that elaborate hierarchical religion, and then, at a certain point, to have all of the props pulled

One result is that I now have a vastly different relationship to my dreams than I did before. I now recognize that dreaming is a way of keeping in contact with spiritual forces, with people one knows, and also with the spirits of the dead. Dreams can also prophesy the future and impart all sorts of incredible information. The "rational" perspective that dreams are just some sort of psychic noise is complete nonsense. Shamanic cultures believe that dreams are more real than ordinary reality—they are emanations from a deeper strata of the psyche.

David Berman



Death just sitting around with no one to kill.

Another result is that I feel able to comprehend what is now happening to the planet on a completely different level. We are engaged in an occult process, not just a battle over material resources and wealth. Corporations are, in themselves, occult entities that behave like "Devas," seeking to compel human belief and sacrifice; television and the media are a form of black magic, a potent technique for indirectly controlling thought and behavior. This may sound funny at first, but when you think about it for a while, you realize that it is literally true. Overcoming this enchantment is humanity's current task.

One thing I had to consider: What does it mean to be a shaman without a tribe, without any knowledge of healing? I found the answer to this in a phrase from *Black Elk Speaks*: "Any place is the center of the world." Shamanism, for me anyway, is now a nonlocalized phenomenon.

Hopefully, my book will act in some small way as a kind of shamanic transmission of energy to anyone who reads it. Unfortunately, I now find

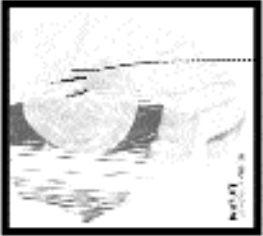
most contemporary fiction and poetry, whether conventional or "avant-garde," unreadable—it is like watching somebody slowly clean the drapes while their house is burning down around them. I was happy that we [Open City Press] could publish *World on Fire* by Michael Brownstein, a

long poetic narrative about corporate globalization and the environmental nightmare. I hope to publish similar engaged and ambitious texts in the future.

But of course it is not enough simply to "sound the alarm"—we have to find a way to conceive of an achievable human future. Poets, artists and novelists could be key to this process, if they can overcome their abnormal fixations on their own ego-structures. You have to let go of your ego, which goes totally against our cultural biases, where we tend to cling to our ego at all costs. This is one reason the establishment hates and fears psychedelics so much: They threaten the ego structure that is the basic disease of our society. Eventually, through the shamanic process, you reintegrate your ego at a different level—I would say a higher level. In a sense, you realize what the Buddhists say: That there was never anything to hold onto in the first place—the conventional ego is just a meaningless illusion.

Despite all appearances to the contrary, we live in a magical world. Millions of people line up to see *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*. What they don't suspect is that they are, in fact, living that story in their own realm—or at least they could be, if they were to wake up and realize the need to fight the machinery of noise and lies that assaults us, as our planet is being reduced to a heap of smoldering slag. Now is the time to use the Force, join the Fellowship, pick up the broomstick and generally get to work. If we don't do it now, we may not have much of a future ahead of us. ☺

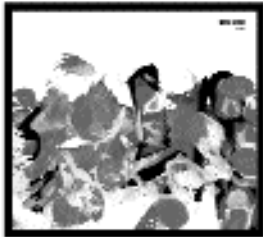
AUDIO DREGS



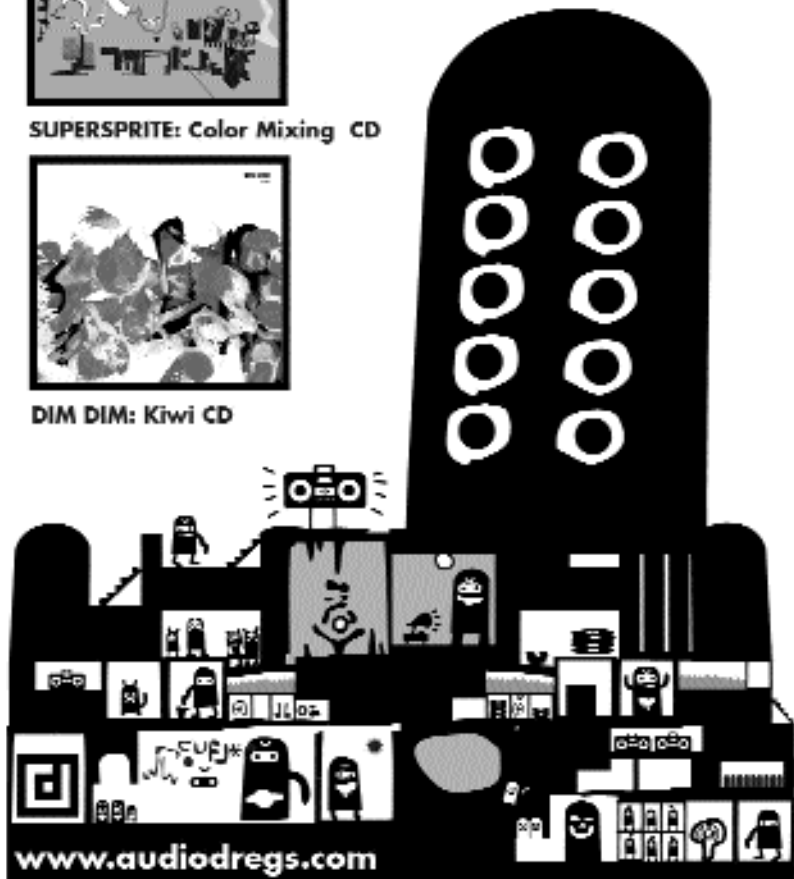
INKBLOT: Love Your Mother CD



SUPERSPRITE: Color Mixing CD



DIM DIM: Kiwi CD



bone drill

continued from page 29 full throttle, drop into the ramp and start pulling airs. It was just powerful enough to maintain my speed, and just light enough so I could get about 23 feet out of the half-pipe—44 feet off the ground. But the bike felt super weird. It was heavy, the engine made the weight offset, and if my timing was off and I missed my pump, I'd fall from the sky like a rock.

One day MTV Sports called to see if I had any new projects I was working on. I invited them out to Oklahoma to check out the giant halfpipe. It was windy, but we were on a tight timeline, so I rode anyway. On one of my airs I came in sideways and spanked the ramp with my torso.

We watched the crash on video and it didn't look that bad. We were still talking about filming more high airs when I noticed my collar bones began to ache. I hadn't taken much of the fall on my arms or shoulders, so I couldn't figure out why they were throbbing. It was pressure from blood hemorrhaging inside my abdominal cavity. Before long I began to get dizzy. On the way to the water cooler, I leaned against a wall for balance, and the floor rushed up to greet me. A few minutes later, the ambulance arrived.

As I lay flat on my back, the medic tried his blood pressure cuff and got a weak pulse. I didn't have five hundred dollars for the ride to the hospital and my health insurance was a shake of the

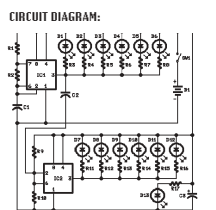
wedge-shaped splinter with a tip thicker than a pencil. It had pierced my right cheek on one side, and come out the other. Deep. It was one of those laughing on the outside, crying on the inside moments. I got out a pair of vise grips, clamped onto the wood near the entry wound, took a deep breath, and pulled. It broke off inside. The tip was sticking out on the other side, so I pressed my luck and tried to pull the fat end through the exit hole. I broke off that end too. By that time, the acute pain had subsided. I went back to riding.

We were holding a contest at the Hoffman Bikes compound in less than two weeks, and there was a lot of work to do fixing up the street park course. The day after my splinter, I was outside pounding nails with Steve, team manager Kim Boyle, and Jamie Mosberg, a cinematographer Airwalk had hired to shoot a promo with me riding my twenty-one foot quarter pipe. Somehow, the subject of who had the hairiest ass came up. Jamie, whose nickname is Mouse, claimed he did, and threw down the challenge. I started laughing that the first contest on the new Hoffman Bikes park was going to be a hair ass contest. I dropped my pants and heard gasps. Mouse technically won, as we discovered his ass is carpeted in brown fur. But my bruised and inflamed splinter tipped the scales in my favor and I was declared the champion. I hadn't told anyone about my splinter, and

ON THE WAY DOWN, A PIECE OF PLYWOOD
PEELED UP AND WAS DRIVEN THROUGH
THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BUTT.



BICYCLE BACK SAFETY LIGHT
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ALSO SUITABLE FOR JOGGER/WALKERS



PARTS:
R1 _____ 10K 1/4W RESISTOR
R2, R9, R10 _____ 100K 1/4W RESISTORS
R3-R8, R11-R16 _____ 10R 1/4W RESISTORS
R17 _____ 150R 1/4W RESISTOR
C1 _____ 1µF 63V POLYESTER CAPACITOR
C2 _____ 10NF 63V POLYESTER CAPACITOR
C3 _____ 100µF 25V ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITOR
D1-D13 _____ RED LEDs 5MM. OR BIGGER, HIGH EFFICIENCY
IC1, IC2 _____ 7555 OR TSS55CN CMOS TIMER IC
SW1 _____ SPST SLIDER SWITCH
B1 _____ 3V BATTERY (2 AA 1.5V CELLS IN SERIES)

DEVICE PURPOSE:
THIS CIRCUIT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A CLEARLY VISIBLE LIGHT, FORMED BY 13 HIGH EFFICIENCY FLASHING LEDs ARRANGED IN A PSEUDO-ROTATING ORDER. DUE TO LOW VOLTAGE, LOW DRAIN BATTERY OPERATION AND SMALL SIZE, THE DEVICE IS SUITABLE FOR MOUNTING ON BICYCLES AS A BACK LIGHT, OR TO PUT ON BY JOGGER/WALKERS.

CIRCUIT OPERATION:

IC1 IS A CMOS VERSION OF THE 555 IC WIRED AS AN ASTABLE MULTIVIBRATOR GENERATING A 50% DUTY-CYCLE SQUARE WAVE AT APPROX. 4HZ FREQUENCY. AT 3V SUPPLY,

555 OUTPUT (PIN 3) SINKING CURRENT OPERATION IS FAR BETTER THAN SOURCING, THEN LED D1-D6 ARE CONNECTED TO POSITIVE SUPPLY. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN

ALTERNATE FLASHING OPERATION, A SECOND 555 IC IS PROVIDED, ACTING AS A TRIGGER PLUS INVERTER AND DRIVING LEDs D7-D12. D13 IS PERMANENTLY ON.

THE LEDs ARE ARRANGED IN A TWO SERIES DISPLAY AS SHOWN BELOW, WITH A CENTER LED PERMANENTLY ON. THIS ARRANGEMENT AND THE ALTERNATE FLASHING OF THE TWO SERIES OF LEDs PROVIDE A PSEUDO-ROTATING APPEARANCE.

FLASHING FREQUENCY CAN BE VARIED CHANGING C1 VALUE.

HIGH EFFICIENCY LEDs ARE ESSENTIAL.



dice, regarding what they'd cover and what they wouldn't. We told the ambulance to go away, and Steve and my girlfriend Jaci brought me in.

The ER doctor examined me and told Steve I'd need an emergency splenectomy to save my life. I had about twenty minutes to live, he said. Inside my ruined spleen was leaking massive amounts of blood—I had lost four pints.

A splenectomy is one of the crazier abdominal surgical procedures. The doctors remove all thirty-something feet of your intestines and put them in a bowl next to you while they mop up the blood and remove chunks of broken spleen floating around inside you. After the ruptured spleen is cleaned out, the doctors check your intestines for holes by hand, like looking for a flat tire in a bike inner tube.

The first thing I saw when I woke up in the recovery room was the MTV producer. I'd just had my colon fondled from the inside, could barely open my eyes, my brain was spaced out on anesthesia, and my whole torso was throbbing from the trauma. "Hey, Mat. I know this is a bad time, but, could you sign this, ah, liability release form for us?"

Number 8: Supersplinter

August, 1993. There's nothing like the feel of having stiff wood rammed into your ass. I'm talking, of course, about splinters. I was having a mellow session on the Ninja Ramp and the plywood surface was in tatters. I didn't really think too much about it. I started working on a few new tricks and crashed, sliding sideways down the tranny. On the way down, a piece of plywood peeled up and was driven through the right side of my butt. I got to the bottom and jumped up like my pants were on fire—a quick inspection revealed a

after the laughter died down, Steve and Kim began to get concerned. I was forced to go to the hospital and have it surgically removed. Mouse brought his camera and documented it, and said he'd edit it to General Hospital music. The next day we shot the Airwalk promo, and I couldn't sit down.

Number 9: Shouldering the Pain

September, 1993. We were holding a Bicycle Stunt comp at the Hoffman Bikes park over Labor Day weekend. My rotator cuff had been torn for a while, and I was scheduled to get surgery on it the Thursday before the comp. I told Dr. Yates we'd need to postpone the surgery so I could ride the contest. I was also intent on riding the twenty-one foot quarter-pipe, for the skeptics in attendance. I did a few airs more than twenty feet high, and on my last aerial my arm gave up the ghost. I totally ripped my rotator cuff off the humerus head. That is a very bad thing. Dr. Yates had his work cut out for him. His surgical notes start with a right shoulder diagnostic arthroscopy, followed by open repair of massive rotator cuff avulsion with bicipital tenodesis and subscapularis tendon.

Translation? Yates told me my rotator cuff muscles were like a thin piece of fatiguing metal. They could snap anytime, and I didn't have any control over it with my arm raised above my head. I could literally rip my arm off if I crashed bad enough. From that day forward, I had to use a shoulder brace with a string attaching the underside of my arm to my ribs, to keep my arm from extending too far up. I lost all movement and strength in my shoulder. After not having a haircut for six years, I shaved my head because I couldn't raise my arm high enough to brush the dreads out. My arm even dis-

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locates in bed sometimes, and it won't go back in. Once I rolled over and my arm fell out of socket. I had Jaci trying to yank it back in, but no go. Finally I had to call Steve at about 6:30 in the morning to help me get it back in. That's the sign of a true friend.

Despite the best medical treatment I could find, my arm has never healed.

Number 10: Weak in the Knees

July, 1995. My meniscus tore in half again over the course of many slams. In the 1990s, street riding was the fastest growing facet of bike riding, and there were many opportunities to see where the limits could be pushed even further. Riding was getting progressive more technical, and really burly. It sucked me in and I found myself riding more street and less vert. Street riding can be like therapy. I'd throw a Suicidal Tendencies tape in the Walkman and set out to unveil what the street had to offer. After a good session I'd come back relaxed and cured. It wasn't uncommon for people to jump off buildings, or if you messed up on a handrail, to tumble down long flights of concrete stairs at full speed. Whenever you crash riding street, your knees usually suffer the most because you try to abandon the bike and run out of the crash. During this era I tore my meniscus, my PCL, and a bunch of other cartilage in my knee. Sometimes the flapping meniscus would get caught up in between my

out one. During the surgery on my rotator cuff, I got a nerve block that made my arm completely numb. It was freaky to get a preview of what it would be like to totally lose arm function.

The surgery went well, and after it healed, my shoulder stayed in its socket better. But Dr. Hawkins didn't have much faith that it would withstand the rigors of riding.

Number 12:

The Battle of Wounded Knee

When I wrecked my ACL and PCL at the Shultz Show in June of 1998, I knew what had happened held grave consequences for my riding. ACL's can probably be repaired a hundred times and still get decent results—their job is to keep your tibia and fibula from sliding up your femur and dislocating. PCL's are much harder to repair, and can only be fixed two or three times before they're toast. I'd just wrecked both the ACL and PCL in one shot. I would have little to no chance of ever riding like I wanted to again, and was looking at a lot of months of pain just to recover. I was twenty-six years old, and had planned on building myself a twenty-six foot ramp for a belated twenty-sixth birthday. My life had just completely changed. Bike riding, as I knew it, was over and I would have to accept it.

I went home and Dr. Yates scheduled me for an operation. I had to wait for a cadaver ligament to be "available." Soon

I SHAVED MY HEAD BECAUSE I COULDN'T RAISE MY ARM HIGH ENOUGH TO BRUSH THE DREADS OUT.

femur and tibia, and lock up my knee. Dr. Yates did another arthroscopic surgery on my right knee and roto-rootered it out. He had to remove my meniscus. I had no shock-absorbing cartilage in the middle of my knee. Yum.

Number 11: Rotator Cuff Rebuild

March, 1996. My shoulder injury put a limit on my riding. Dr. Yates said that there was nothing left to do; my shoulder was fucked. I think he was sick of spending hours putting it back together only to have me rip it right up again. Basically it had come to the point where I had to decide: If I chose to ride and challenge myself more, then I could lose my arm. I decided I wasn't done yet.

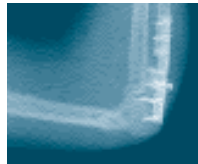
Yates suggested I see what the Stedman-Hawkins Clinic could do for me. It was located in Vail, Colorado, and I scheduled a stay, right after my first B.A.S.E. jump in New Orleans. Dr. Hawkins was the shoulder specialist and Dr. Steadman, the knee guy. They are a world-renowned surgery group and the team doctors for the Denver Broncos, Colorado Rockies, and the U.S. Ski Team. I flew into Denver and took a bus to Vail. This was my first solo mission to try and find a procedure that would get my body working again. My plan was to get Dr. Steadman to check out my knee and fix my PCL, which I'd torn a couple years earlier. At the same time I was there to have Dr. Hawkins double up the surgeries, with a rotator cuff overhaul. That way I could stack the recovery times together and be out for the least amount of time. However, after I arrived I found out the knee would take too long to recuperate, and I was scheduled to do the closing ceremonies of the Olympics. I decided to just get my shoulder fixed. I could still ride without a PCL, and live with-

thereafter, I got the call that someone's Achilles was packed in ice, on its way to meet me. The surgery was a real challenge. Since I'd torn both my ACL and PCL, there wasn't any accurate way to ensure a tight, centered implementation of both ligaments. I wasn't encouraged that the outcome would be successful. But I had a very skilled master surgeon on my side, and the winds of fortune blowing my way the day of the operation. It took months, but my knee healed nicely with even tension from both the front and back ligaments.

The next time I got on my bike, I had to struggle to clear five feet of air. I was being mellow, trying to get acclimated to the feel of my bike moving underneath me. It was so foreign. It gave me a whole new respect for bikers. I couldn't believe how much I'd taken my skills for granted when I was at the top of my game. Now those skills were gone. I played around, sticking to lip tricks until my brakes slipped on a Canadian nosepick. I dropped to the bottom like a dot com stock. When my leg hit the ramp, my lower leg sheared off and rode up my femur, completely tearing my ACL. I couldn't believe it. I wondered, again, if this was it for my days as a biker.

Number 13: The Synthetic Solution

February, 1999. I decided I wasn't ready to give up yet. After crashing the Canadian pick and trashing my cadaver components, I became desperate for a way to fix my knee. I'd need another operation just to walk, so I figured I might as well research every alternative treatment done on ACL/PCL replacement. Thank God for the Internet. I found hope in the form of synthetic ligament replacement procedures. Just as quickly, I ran into a brick wall in the U.S., because the FDA refused to sanction synthetics, citing it wasn't a long-



TOBIN SPROUT



Acting as a teacher for his new album, due out February 2002, 'Sentimental Stabons' is classic Sprout. It is full of the beautiful melodies and lovely word play we have come to expect from our hero. We are joined with beautiful tape saturation and, mostly, well rounded vocals and instrumentally - all wrapped in production that sounds like it is straight from the Joe Meek how-to handbook.

Click here: www.tobinsprout.com

GUIDED BY VOICES



Following the release of their most critically acclaimed record to date, Guided By Voices are here to offer you 'The Pipe Dreams Of Infant Prince Whiggle,' a collection of odds and ends for your listening pleasure. This 10 track LP offers up vinyl only tracks, UK 6 sides, and previously unissued recordings. CD and limited edition LP available.

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VARIOUS ARTIST



The Caffeinated Robots operate as a non-profit group that provide funds for the Martha Milard Robinson Scholarship Foundation set up to help underprivileged children appreciate the arts. The Robots assembled this little collection to help benefit this cause.

Featuring: EXCLUSIVELY FROM: Robert Holland, Urando, The Green Pajamas, Tobin Sprout, David Garza, Mark Kozelski, Ron Saxsmith, Candy Butchers, The Impossible Shapes, The National Spills, Kingsbury Mann, and more!

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GREEN PAJAMAS



'If She Only Knew' expands upon The Green Pajamas' already stunning catalog of psychedelic pop masterpieces. In addition to the three brand new and exclusive songs featured here, we are treated to a terribly rare live performance by the band where they cover "Autumn Leaves" - a song written by Jeff Kelly and originally appeared on an album by The Golden Menkel - a side project of lead Green Pajama Jeff Kelly.

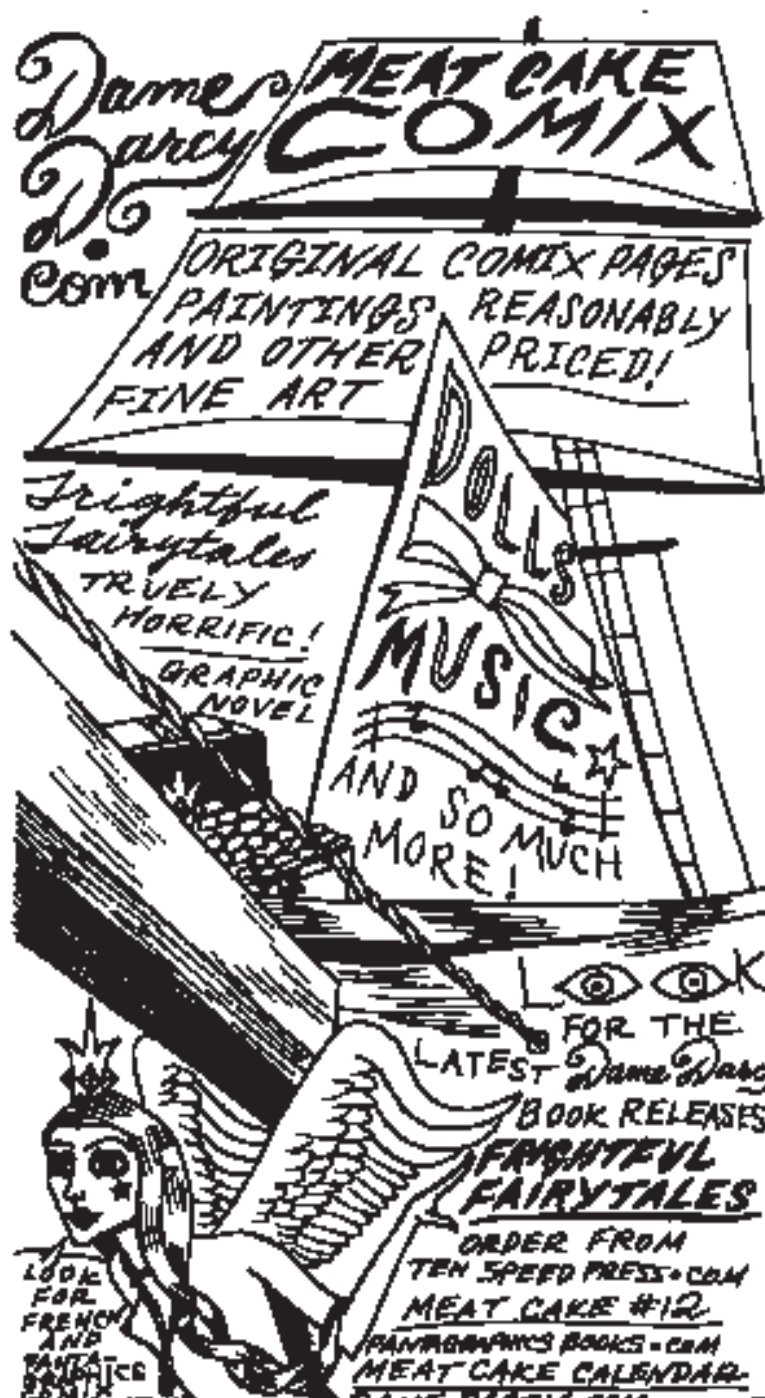
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bone drill



HOFFMAN AT 15. IMAGINE LUGGING THESE TROPHIES DOWN THE AISLE ON THE AIRPLANE FLIGHT HOME.

{photo courtesy of matt hoffman}

term option. By even giving me advice on how to get the procedure done elsewhere, a doctor practicing in the U.S. would put their medical license in jeopardy. It's funny how you think you own your body, yet the government really has control over us in so many ways. Dr. Yates knew the deal, though, and was very helpful in steering me in the right direction for plastic parts: France. Their top orthopedic doctors had been successfully doing ACL repair on rugby players using a thing called the LARS ligament. These guys were back on the field after only four weeks—my previous surgery took me out for six months.

I started sending faxes and emails to French doctors with unpronounceable names.

I narrowed it down to two options. I could go to France to have the surgery done, or go to the French province of Montreal, in Canada. I chose Canada for its socialized medicine. The prices were right, only about five thousand dollars for the entire operation. It ended up going down like a drug deal on Miami Vice. I had to go alone, and bring cash, and pay the doctor in my hotel room the day before. The downside was, they wanted me to be a human guinea pig. They were doing research on the operation and wanted to prove it could be done without extensive anesthetics, which are the most dangerous part of any surgery. By proving it was possible to do the surgery without anesthetics, they could promote it as a safe alternative to ACL reconstruction, increasing their odds of being sanctioned by the FDA.

The procedure called for them to open up my knee and drill a six-millimeter hole down the length of my femur. The drill bit was fifteen inches long. I would be fully conscious and have no pain medication for the surgery. In fact, I could watch close on three TV monitors in the room.

It was kind of like an interactive horror movie. My skin was numbed with a local anesthesia, and then the doctors brought out the drill. "We haven't figured out a way to numb the inside of the bone, so this will hurt," my doctor said to me. It hit bone and the room filled with a smell that, well, I don't think you ever want to get a whiff of your own bones smoking. The drill surged and grunted onward, the tiny motor straining as the pain began to increase. Then the tip broke through into the marrow. My heart rate was

supposed to stay below eighty beats per minute, and it shot through the roof when I felt the hot drill strike the soft marrow inside my femur. It was pain taken to a new level. The knobs turned to an eleven-kind of painful. It didn't help matters to actually see what bone marrow looks like; spongy red and yellowish pulp, like corned beef hash. I had to struggle and concentrate on my

walk, and had no crutches. I got two chairs under my arms and used them to slowly crab across the room to the beckoning toilet. It was a painful, sluggish struggle.

On the third day I got in a cab to the airport, boarded my flight, and went home a new man, with new knees, and a new lease on life.

Number 14: Snapping the Ski Rope

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS POSSIBLE ON A BIKE WITHOUT BRAKES, AND IT WAS LIKE A NEW SPORT.

breathing to get my heart rate down, while squeezing the steel rails of the bed with my hands as tightly as I could. Every once in a while the nurse would lean over and say in broken Franglish, "You doing real well, Mot." This went on for the longest thirty minutes of my life. Once there were holes in my femur and tibia, the doctors threaded a polyester ligament through the bony tunnels. Basically, they put a ski rope where my ACL once was.

Afterward I was sewn up and I sat up on the table. There was an awkward pause as the doctor snapped off his latex gloves. I'd just had major surgery, without drugs. "Am I free to go?" I asked, my mind reeling and unsure of what to do. "Yep," said the doctor. We shook hands and I limped from the surgical table to go outside and flag down a cab.

I finally got a cab and crumpled into the back seat, marveling at the incredible strangeness of life. Ten minutes ago there were six hands shoving tools and titanium screws inside my knee, and suddenly I was in some dirty shoebox of a taxi, hustling back to my hotel. I kept thinking I was doing something wrong; there was very little post-operative pampering and nurturing going on. At the hotel, I fell in bed and flipped on the TV. I settled in for what would become a forty-eight hour pay-per-view marathon, starting with the buddy cop comedy Rush Hour, subtitled in French. Before long I had to use the bathroom, and faced my first crisis; I couldn't

May, 1999. The LARS ligament healed up clean and quick, and I was back on my bike in a month. I rode and grew stronger, clearing my brain of business troubles by carving around on the half-pipe. Before long I was eyeing a line which had been calling me for over a year: a big transfer from the vert ramp to the street course. It was during a casual session at the Hoffman Bikes Christmas party, when I decided to give myself a present: the gap. I launched and pulled the highest back flip I could over it, and in my enthusiasm, over rotated. I was wearing a knee brace and still managed to dislocate my knee on impact. The synthetic ligament was ripped out of my femur, and I was back to square one. I didn't know what to do, and felt totally defeated. It was another black day at Hoffman Bikes.

I sent a letter to the doctor in Canada that did the LARS surgery and he said it would have been really hard to break the synthetic ligament, they were supposed to last at least five years. Dr. Yates did an exploratory surgery and found the ligament wasn't broken, I'd just yanked it out where it was anchored into my femur. He reattached it with a better procedure, implanting a little more titanium into my body. Two weeks later I had a fully functioning right knee again.

But I didn't hop back on my bike immediately. I'd just been through a frightening two years, plagued by knee problems, and I wanted to be mentally ready for what came next. I didn't

want to rush out and push myself in a race to get back my chops. It was also a tough time to make this decision. The sport was bigger than it had ever been, and it was the most lucrative time to compete in the pro vert class. You could make ten thousand dollars for a flawless two minutes on the ramp. I was staging events, running a company to pay back my debts, and watching everyone prosper.

I'd pushed the boundaries throughout my career, and knew there were other things I still wanted to do on my bike. But I couldn't expect my body to keep up with my mind, without ending back up in the hospital. I wanted to go in a new direction entirely—one that was a challenge, but also without expectations. I took my brakes off, to rediscover my bike under the new terms I was dealt. I didn't know what was possible on a bike without brakes, and it was like a new sport. At one point I stripped my bike down to just the essentials: a frame, fork, bars, crankset, and wheels. Just too see what I could do with that. I was in my own world. I went back to the beginning; to the rewards that got me interested in the first place. Just riding. Not competing, not endorsing, nothing else but discovering what I could do with my bike and my body. I wasn't in a class any more.

People ask me if all this trauma and suffering was worth it. I've invented over one hundred original ramp tricks. I can roll in and catch fifteen feet of air without pedaling. I've felt the rush of taking off my hands during 540s spun eleven feet out. I've jumped my bike off the edge of a thirty two-hundred-foot cliff. I've shot up a ramp to see what the ground looks like from fifty feet above it and rode away from peril. I've ridden for crowds of screaming people, eighty thousand strong. And I've ridden by myself, where the only sound was my breath and my tires singing on plywood for hours on end, when there was no else left to ride with.

None of it would have ever happened if I thought the pain and suffering it would take to ride my bike and follow my heart wasn't worth it. If you want to experience life's pleasures, you have to be willing to take all the pain and failures.

I love what I do. No regrets. **@**



BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BIKE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE IT WHERE I LIKE

YOU SAY BLACK I SAY WHITE
YOU SAY BARK I SAY BITE
YOU SAY SHARK I SAY HEY MAN
JAWS WAS NEVER MY SCENE
AND I DON'T LIKE STAR WARS
YOU SAY ROLLS I SAY ROYCE
YOU SAY GOD GIVE ME A CHOICE
YOU SAY LORD I SAY CHRIST
I DON'T BELIEVE IN PETER PAN
FRANKENSTEIN OR SUPERMAN
ALL I WANNA DO IS

BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BIKE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY -

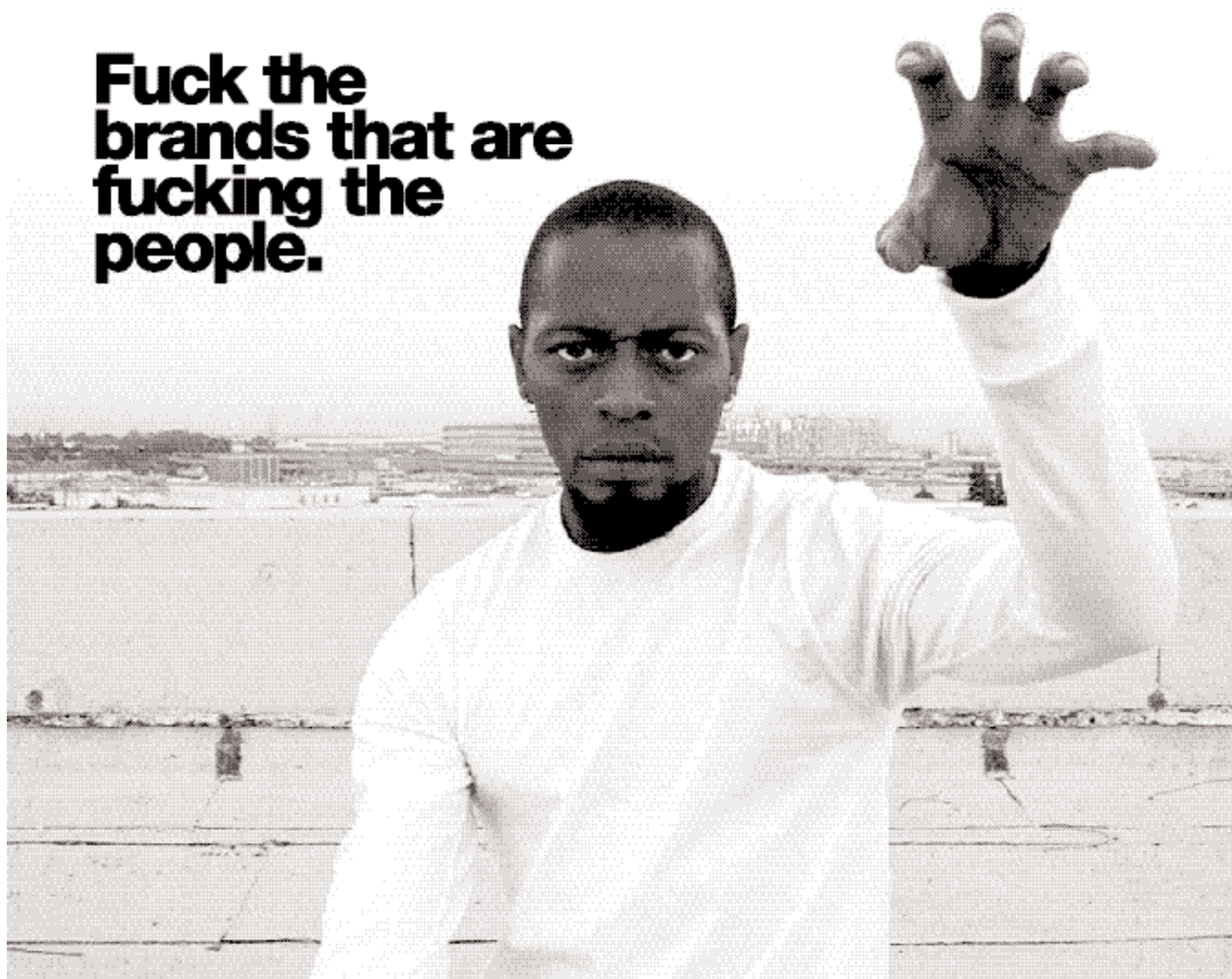
BICYCLE RACES ARE COMING YOUR WAY
SO FORGET ALL YOUR DUTIES OH YEAH
FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS
THEY'LL BE RIDING TODAY
SO LOOK OUT FOR THOSE BEAUTIES OH YEAH
ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, GO!
BICYCLE RACE BICYCLE RACE BICYCLE RACE
BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE BICYCLE
I WANT A BICYCLE RACE

HEY
YOU SAY COKE I SAY CAINE
YOU SAY JOHN I SAY WAYNE
HOT DOG I SAY COOL IT MAN
I DON'T WANNA BE THE PRESIDENT OF AMERICA
YOU SAY SMILE I SAY CHEESE
INCOME TAX I SAY JESUS
I DON'T WANT TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR VIETNAM OR WATERGATE
'COS ALL I WANNA DO IS

BICYCLE (YEAH) BICYCLE (EH) BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE BICYCLE (E'MON) BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BIKE
I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE
I WANT TO RIDE IT WHERE I LIKE



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bull tongue

exploring the voids of all known undergrounds

by byron cole and thurston moore

The concept of this column is simple: to cast light on scenes, music, words and images that are ignored by the handmaidens of capitalist culture. Living people seem to be tired of gagging on the brackish pabulum of the known. We would like to offer them access to new nooks. That is all. To start this first installment, here is some bottled screed tossed from the Sonic Youth tour bus:

The 1970s punk rock scene in NYC never paid heed to L.A. And London did not have a clue. There was one record store in 1978/79 NYC on 1st Avenue around 3rd Street that actually had copies of the first West Coast punk rock 7"s. I remember seeing the Dangerhouse 7"s of X and Black Randy and wondering why they were even there. They seemed to be from a distant world as opposed to the spotlight punk scenes of NYC and London. I was curious about their weirdness and I bought the X one. I had read how they were the main L.A. punk group who played in a graffiti-

drenched dungeon in Hollywood called the Masque. And I bought the Black Randy one cuz the cover was so completely inane, with comic book panels referencing a bizarre Hollywood sex-joke juvenilia. It was a repartee I have only just gleaned. And that gleaming is thanks to *We Got the Neutron Bomb* (Three River Press/Random House) an oral history of the early L.A. punk scene, edited by noted L.A. punk impresario/historian Brendan Mullen. Brendan, a founder of the Masque, also helped Germs drummer Don Bolles edit and prepare *Lexicon Devil* (Feral House Press, www.feralhouse.com) an oral history of Darby Crash and the Germs. *We Got the Neutron Bomb*, gaping holes and all, acts as an almost necessary precursive read to *Lexicon Devil*.

The X single struck me as interesting if only because it was so different than the Ramones/Heartbreakers crunge I heard in the NYC clubs. Its obvious "poetic" sploo was also quite odd in comparison to the St. Marks Church visions of Patti Smith, Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine. And it certainly wasn't the sex bop of Blondie or the artschool geekage of Talking Heads. And it didn't have the ground zero allure of primo London punk—Sex Pistols, X Ray Spex, et al. The Black Randy 7" made no sense whatsoever, 'though the barking retardo chorus of "trouble at the cup! trouble at the cup!" had a genuine other planet punk rock sensibility.

That other planet was L.A. and the only images available of L.A. punk in NYC were from imported issues of *Slash* and *Flipside*, magazines found only at Sohozat on West Broadway between Canal and Grand St. (or sometimes at Revenge on Third Avenue just south of St. Marks Place) (or at Manic Panic right on St. Marks Place just west of Second Avenue). I suppose Bleeker Bob's, then on Macdougall just south of 8th Street, would carry them as well. Bleeker Bob was dependable for carrying any 7" from the nascent punk rock scene upon its initial availability and had a large collection of 'zines. Unfortunately, all of these items were behind the counter and you had to brave a request to check any of them out, which would invariably mean that Bob himself would humiliate you with assholeistic douchebaggery. Plus, there were usually repellant Who-collector clientele farting about the place. These dupes

would be aggressively collecting "anything on Stiff Records" and wearing Gen X and Joe Jackson badges while still secretly believing that Steely Dan were valid. Blugg.

The images in the punk zines of L.A. showed bands and fans all dressed up in '77-era leather, bondage and PUNK regalia. This was a style identified with the U.K. and no one in NYC bought into it, knowing that it was an extreme and manipulated reaction to Richard Hell, the Ramones, Blondie, Wayne County, Mink Deville, et al. To see an American city like L.A., and to a slightly more obscure (yet more typically urban) extent S.F., adopt this identity seemed dopey. At this time, downtown NYC had a developing post-punk community of artists and musicians exhibiting a new radical style of nihilism and producing sex/danger noise/vision. This was "no wave" and it was committed to destroying any strain of rock 'n' roll still alive in punk. To the no wave, the new wave of punk rock was corny. Seeing, hearing and playing atonal guitar monotony in a Broome Street gallery was formidable and it was a formulative experience for my 18-year-old psyche. I'm glad to have been there, all the while thinking that L.A. was nothing but a sea of goofy punk hairdos that weren't even of their own creation.

I'd see Sid and Stiv Bators skinking around St. Marks and would follow them at a careful distance, wondering how to tell them I was the guitar player Sid should be playing with. The fact that Sid was a heroin dog never really registered to me at the nefarious level it should have. Even though I had near proximity to his thereabouts at the time (as he was always at the same CBGB gigs, etc.), the reality of me ever hooking up or communicating with him was completely farfetched. Plus, I was conflicted by an incident involving him slashing Patti Smith's brother's face with a broken beer bottle. But when Sid died it was a landmark event for all of us, and punk CHANGED right then and there. The ideals went into transition: Patti moved to Detroit and married/disappeared. Richard Hell went even more subterranean. The Ramones began to be taken for granted in their perfection. Johnny Rotten made the genius

move of experimenting with dub-radics and Sid Vicious remained dead. London went dipshit with new wave, new romantic and some kind of pirate bullshit, but also had an onslaught of cool Rough Trade-inspired art-school punk (Raincoats, Pop Group). NYC went beyond no wave into Bush Tetras/ESG/Eight-Eyed Spy grey-scale rhythm music and serious noise composition (Glen Branca, UT, Rhys Chatham, Information). And California continued being punk (but also with its own buy-in to dipshit new wave, the examples of which are too wretched to list here). But L.A., by documented proof, particularly The Germs' (*G.I.*) LP, X's *Los Angeles* LP, the first SST and Dangerhouse label 7"s, the Circle Jerks *Group Sex* LP and the wild issues of *Slash* magazine, was also evincing an exciting creative energy identity, unlike the intellectual toe-sniffing of NYC. L.A. was punk rock. But punk rock was over, wasn't it? The new hardcore kids, romping around Avenue A with the Black Flag bars and the Germs' blue circle on their leather jackets, certainly did not agree. Nor did they care if anyone thought otherwise.

L.A. punk in 1978 was not an affront to a culture-clashed society in a Thatcher-strangled depression. It was a reaction to a mellow Eagles/Jackson Brown "L.A. Sound" and the suburban mom 'n' dad nowhere zone of SoCal. And it was decidedly anti-hippie. Hippie had been the dominant youth culture vanguard for too long. Glam/glitter-rock had never threatened hippie hegemony. If it was seen as anything, it was as a somewhat sex-wild cultural adjunct to hippiedom. But PUNK ROCK, which spun obliquely out of glam/glitter, was hardly foreseen by the potted royalty of the hippie elite. Punk set itself on a crash course to puncture the self-satisfied bloat of the longhair paunches. The punk rock revolution destroyed hippie. From its smoking ruins emerged the sentient force of real rock 'n' roll fun.

Darby Crash and Pat Smear were glam freaks at 14 and their intention was to play glitter trash without regard to technical ability. By being young and in Santa Monica (and not in, say, the obscure Midwest climes of

the Electric Eels/Rocket from the Tombs/Dead Boys scene; or "older" post-Stooges freaks, like the Ramones, who Darby and Pat found kinda normal), they were privy to a Kim Fowley/Joan Jett poison zone and were allowed to BECOME, in utter disarray, a group so sparked by not-long-for-this-world genius it still leaves me breathless to think they actually existed. Darby was born the same year as me, 1958, as I realized when I visited his mom's house in the late '90s with David Markey to interview her on video. (We also video-documented the unshrouded original Masque with Don Bolles as guide. All the graffiti from the day the place was chained shut in the '70s had remained. It was frozen in time. Supposedly, it has since been painted over.) She showed us Darby's room and her photo book of pix of Darby on his minibike, and I knew this kid would've been either my worst influence and/or best friend/enemy, had I happened to live there. The Masque would've transformed me, by sucking me into the orbit of Trudi and the punk habitues of the Plunger Pit. When first visiting L.A. in the early '80s I would stalk around the Westside of L.A., where Kim [Gordon]'s parents lived, knowing it was Germs territory (Kim went to UNI High School, the same high school as Darby and Pat). When the Germs *Caught in My Eye 12"* was released, I first heard it on Rodney Bingenheimer's *Rodney on the ROQ* show. I was profoundly jolted by what I instantly sensed to be one of the most furiously damaged punk-poetic recordings of the 20th Century.

The primitive repetition and mono boredom-core of the first Germs 7" "Forming" is as transcendent an American outsider recording as exists, inhabiting the same mythical light as anything Harry Smith might've uncovered on a backwoods 78 of the 1920s. When Darby recites his brat-commentary at song's end, berating-yet-celebrating the Germs' "effort," it is at once the most giddily frightening and genuinely liberating experience documented by punk rock youth. When Pat Smear's slashing downstroke guitar style, Lorna Doom's zoned-out thump/dump bass and Don Bolles' stoned record-collector drumming gel into the most panic attack-driven punk rock band EVER on "Lexicon Devil" (or any other track they recorded), you hear the future of punk explode through hardcore and then mature into the experimental stylings of everything from Nirvana to Alan Licht. The weird, glam-blasted LEADS Pat overdubs on some of these tracks are utterly twisted and insane in their minimalist sting. Darby's own little glam-blown vox moves, in and around his minimalist boy-growl, is out-and-out rock 'n' roll purity. Darby's lyrics ring more obvious in retrospect now, knowing his inspirations (EST, Scientology, Manson, Bowie), but they are still shocking in the context of what was happening around the Masque at the time (the entire universe for those involved). And this is a universe we can now confirm as supremely consequential and important to radical rock 'n' roll history (the Germs' *G.I.* CD on Slash has all the single trax, the LP, the 12" and more. It's essential). This universe was L.A., and it was Darby's complete kingdom. When he traveled to London, where he was an utter non-celebrity, he returned with an Adam Ant Mohican. Drug- and alcohol-



NUKEARS

WASHINGTON MAY NEED TO TEST NUKE BUNKER-BUSTERS BY JEAN-MICHEL STOUILLIG WASHINGTON - MAR 18, 2002 THE NEW US NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, WHICH HINTS AT ABANDONMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING, COULD LIFT THE TABOO ON USE OF SUCH WEAPONS AND POSSIBLY ENCOURAGE PROLIFERATION, EXPERTS SUGGESTED FRIDAY.

"ONE CORNERSTONE OF NONPROLIFERATION AGREEMENTS IS THE IDEA THAT THERE IS A NORM AGAINST THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WHETHER IT IS MORAL OR MILITARY OR WHATEVER," SAID CHRIS HELMAN OF THE CENTER FOR DEFENSE INFORMATION, A LIBERAL WASHINGTON-BASED THINK TANK.

"THERE IS A WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE THAT THEY ARE UNSUITABLE WEAPONS, BUT AS SOON AS THEY HAVE A VALUE, OTHER PEOPLE WILL HAVE THEM," HE ADDED.

THE NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW, A SECRET REPORT TO CONGRESS LEAKED BY THE US PRESS, SUGGESTS THE NEED FOR NEW NUCLEAR TRIALS "TO MEET THE NATION'S DEFENSE GOALS IN THE 21ST CENTURY." IT POINTS TO THE POTENTIAL USE OF US NUCLEAR STRIKES AGAINST NON-NUCLEAR ARMED NATIONS PURSUING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, AS WELL AS FORMER COLD WAR ENEMY RUSSIA AND CHINA.

THE UNITED STATES MUST BE PREPARED FOR POTENTIAL NATIONAL SECURITY CONTINGENCIES INVOLVING NON-NUCLEAR ARMED NEIGHBORS "IN SETTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NUCLEAR STRIKE CAPABILITIES," THE REVIEW SAID.

IMMEDIATE CONTINGENCIES COULD INCLUDE AN IRAQI ATTACK ON ISRAEL OR ITS NEIGHBORS, A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK ON SOUTH KOREA, OR A MILITARY CONFRONTATION OVER THE STATUS OF TAIWAN, THE REPORT SUGGESTED.

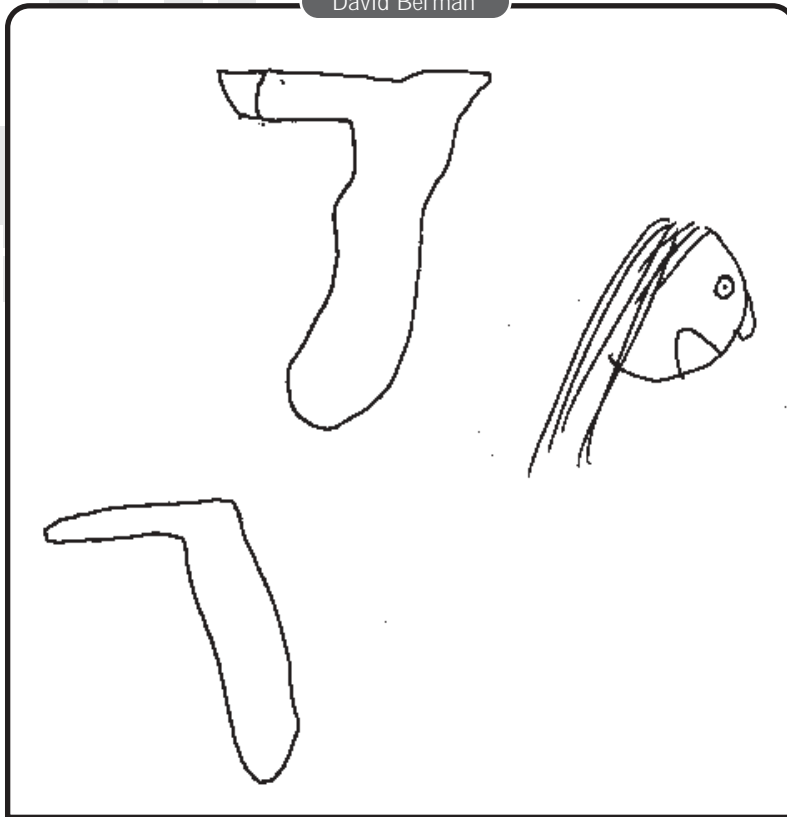
IRAN, SYRIA AND LIBYA COULD ALSO BECOME IMMEDIATE CONTINGENCIES BECAUSE OF THEIR "LONG STANDING HOSTILITY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND ITS SECURITY PARTNERS," IT SAID. THE REVIEW ALSO UNDERSCORES THE PENTAGON'S CONCERN THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AND HOSTILE GROUPS RELY ON DEEP UNDERGROUND FACILITIES TO HIDE THEIR WEAPONRY AND COMMAND POSTS.

ACCORDING TO THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, AT LEAST 10,000 SUCH BUNKERS CURRENTLY EXIST IN OVER 70 COUNTRIES. MORE THAN 1,400 OF THEM ARE USED AS STRATEGIC STORAGE SITES FOR WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, CONCEALED LAUNCH PADS FOR BALLISTIC MISSILES AS WELL AS LEADERSHIP OR TOP ECHELON COMMAND AND CONTROL POSTS, THE DIA ESTIMATES.

"AT PRESENT THE UNITED STATES LACKS ADEQUATE MEANS TO DEAL WITH THESE STRATEGIC FACILITIES," THE REVIEW POINTED OUT. THE ANSWER, IN THE US MILITARY'S VIEW, LIES IN DEVELOPING AND TESTING A NEW GENERATION OF SMALLER BUT MORE EFFECTIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CAPABLE OF DESTROYING THESE UNDERGROUND FACILITIES. "NEW CAPABILITIES MUST BE DEVELOPED TO DEFEAT EMERGING THREATS SUCH AS HARD AND DEEPLY BURIED TARGETS ... TO FIND AND ATTACK MOBILE AND RELOCATABLE TARGETS, TO DEFEAT CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL AGENTS, AND TO IMPROVE ACCURACY AND LIMIT COLLATERAL DAMAGE," IT ADDED. BRIEFED ON IT PREVIOUSLY, THE CAVE AND TUNNEL COMPLEXES BURIED IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THAT CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRY WOULD BE IDEAL TARGETS FOR THE BURROWING WEAPONS, DEFENSE EXPERTS HAVE SUGGESTED, AS WOULD THE BUNKERS OF IRAQI LEADER SADDAM HUSSEIN, WHOSE REGIME IS THOUGHT TO BE THE NEXT TARGET OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S ANTI-TERROR WAR.



David Berman



Two Floridas and one Duane Allman.



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ONCE AN ALLY OF THE CHEROKEES, PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON AUTHORIZED THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT OF 1830, FOLLOWING THE RECOMMENDATION OF PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE IN HIS FINAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS IN 1825. JACKSON SANCTIONED AN ATTITUDE THAT HAD PERSISTED FOR MANY YEARS AMONG MANY WHITE IMMIGRANTS. EVEN THOMAS JEFFERSON, WHO OFTEN CITED THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE OF THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY AS THE MODEL FOR THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, SUPPORTED INDIAN REMOVAL AS EARLY AS 1802.

THE DISPLACEMENT OF NATIVE PEOPLE WAS NOT WANTING FOR ELOQUENT OPPOSITION. SENATORS DANIEL WEBSTER AND HENRY CLAY SPOKE OUT AGAINST REMOVAL.

REVEREND SAMUEL WORCESTER, MISSIONARY TO THE CHEROKEES, CHALLENGED GEORGIA'S ATTEMPT TO EXTINGUISH INDIAN TITLE TO LAND IN THE STATE, WINNING THE CASE BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT.

WORCESTER VS. GEORGIA, 1832, AND CHEROKEE NATION VS. GEORGIA, 1831, ARE CONSIDERED THE TWO MOST INFLUENTIAL DECISIONS IN INDIAN LAW. IN EFFECT, THE OPINIONS CHALLENGED THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE REMOVAL ACT AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRECEDENT FOR UNAPPLIED INDIAN-FEDERAL LAW WAS ESTABLISHED BY JACKSON'S DEFIANT ENFORCEMENT OF THE REMOVAL.

AN ESTIMATED 4,000 DIED FROM HUNGER, EXPOSURE AND DISEASE. THE JOURNEY BECAME AN ETERNAL MEMORY AS THE "TRAIL WHERE THEY CRIED" FOR THE CHEROKEES AND OTHER REMOVED TRIBES. TODAY IT IS REMEMBERED AS THE TRAIL OF TEARS.



befuddled, he was still just a loose nut kid. He must've realized the inability of his world-dominance vision to have any significant impact beyond the L.A. punk scene. He certainly didn't possess the ability to propagate it in any larger forum.

Darby died the same weekend as Beatle John, which is too cool, even though it was deemed dumbass at the time. I recall picking up the issue of *Flipside* with its all-black cover and the tiny words of "darby crash r.i.p" as the lone graphic. I stared at this, thinking how no one in NYC knew anything about this kid who suicided himself as a punk revolutionary. I certainly couldn't fathom it, though I felt it would be important to me somehow. This significance should flash through anyone immediately upon hearing the classic masterworks the band recorded. Through the wildfire of the U.S. hardcore scene and the shifting importance of the living underground, Darby Crash and the Germs eventually reached their desired mythopoetic level. Darby remains, as himself, and within the Germs' context, a critical flashpoint in rock 'n' roll. The fact that neither the *Slash* magazine intelligentsia (Bob Biggs, Claude Bessy, Chris D.) nor the other artists he respected (Exene) fell for his "ideas" (Germs burns and slavish idolatry) must've proved very real personal obstacles to his vision of himself as a "leader". I can only hope he knew, somehow, through his omnipresent fog of immaturity, that these same people, and all the distant acolytes, did and would forever adore him.

* * *

Back to Byron... But let it not be said that everything is equally transcendent in the world of punk reading. Two other recent volumes are even more replete with holes than *Neutron Bomb*, although they are also not-without-interest. *American Hardcore* by Steve Blish (Feral House Press, as above) is a pri-

marily oral history of a certain wing of the American punk scene from 1980-86. There are some interesting bits in the book, but Blish's bias in favor of the more mediocre elements of the East Coast contingents makes his portrait a bit unbalanced. The layout and



presentation of the material are also distractingly lousy, as is the tone of the editorial inserts. Still, some dots get connected here, and there are also

reprints of some of the worst fliers you've ever seen. More graphically interesting is *Punk*, an oversized coffee table book by Stephen Colegrove and Chris Sullivan (Thunder's Mouth Press, 161 William St. 16th fl. New York City, NY 10038). Considering that the publisher has done a bunch of poetry books, it's a bit astounding that no proofreaders caught the mislabeling of photos of such well-known writers as Gregory Corso and Peter Orlovsky, but I suppose it's hard to get decent help everywhere these days. That said, *Punk*'s authors at least try to place punk rock inside the contextual flow of poetry, the Warhol crowd, glitter-rock and other subterranean flows with which it was intimately connected. It's tellingly a-literate that the authors label Charles Bukowski one of the key figures of the Beat Generation (I bet he's shitting in his grave just thinking about it), but there are lots of fine pics and some very good information about the early days of the British punk explosion. Great it ain't, but if you bought it for yr parents you could read it while at their house. If they already have a



coffee table, what the hell?

Of course, in most ways, male punk rock has been a conceptual dead end for decades. Apart from the Buff Medways, you'd have a heck of a time thinking of a guy band that has the punk energy or anti-style of Erase

Errata or the Magic Markers (to name but two gal-punk giantesses). But when something like the Bad Times LP (Goner Records P.O. Box

40566, Memphis, TN 38174-0566, www.goner-records.com) comes along, it becomes apparent that there's still some life force lurking in the corpse of male punk proper. The Bad Times were a one-shot project done by three of the Southeast U.S.'s heavier raunch epistemologists—Jay Reatard, King Louie Bankston and Eric Oblivian. This eponymous album documents their sole session, and it is a masterpiece of lo-fi scuzz punk, combining many of the most mind-boiling elements of the bands that gave birth to its participants. There is a kind of American garage punk sloth that



sometimes seems to be the exclusive purview of Japanese bands, but the Bad Times wrest control of it back (if only for this album). Their sound is equal parts Guitar Wolf, the Gibson Brothers and Halo of Flies. And when they tear into a cover of Friction's "Crazy Dream" your eyes will fill with tears as they have never been filled before.

What the best U.S. males really offer now, in the place of punk rock, is well documented on a new videotape

by the Providence duo Lightning Bolt. *Power of Salad* (Load Records, P.O. Box 35, Providence, RI 02901) was recorded at 19 dates during their summer '01 tour of the States. It shows both the wall-melting power that can be achieved by just a bassist and a drummer (if you've never heard Lightning Bolt, imagine a two-man hybrid of the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Black Sabbath as interpolated by the Sun City Girls), as well as the sort of venues that you have to play in order to get a gig in Lubbock, TX. The

band pile-drives through their sets, tearing the collected bohos in twain, and then talks classic rock theory while motoring to the next show. The vid is put together like a well-crafted pair of trousers – the live stuff,

interviews, animated bits and poster shows all serve utilitarian and aesthetic purposes. But what one really gets from this tape is not a message, it is the rampant desire to see Lightning Bolt live, an experience as loud as it is bracing. They're due for some new records soon, too, so check the website at loadrecords.com as well.

The New York combo Black Dice, are brothers (or at least cousins) to Lightning Bolt. Black Dice may have a different structural feel going for them, but the massiveness of their sonic urk is as undeniable as a slippery foot in the grave. The band have a few odd releases scattered here and there, but their primary vinyl offering thus far is an eponymous LP issued by Catsup Plate Recordings (P.O. Box 1277, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276, www.catsupplate.com). As autonomously frigged as most of the other records on this label, Black Dice begins with the sound of music boxes licking turds off Christ's amp, before devolving into thugly twists of stop/start/stagger/hover dynamism. The band uses standard-issue post-core instrumental lingo and propulsion to take things into realms far beyond the ken of the average buzz-cutters. While

bull tongue

exploring the voids of all known undergrounds

not as confrontationally artfied as the work of Lightning Bolt, this stuff is still magnificently loud and annoying rock-based evil. What a pleasure to enjoy it today! Catsup Plate has also issued a lathe-cut LP by Black Dice member Eric Copeland. Entitled *Heavy Afternoon Buzz/Late at Night a Day Lay*, it is an entirely different can of lips. Broken into a pair of side-long suites, this album is a pure experimental response to the dictates of archaic huzz, generated entirely by an old tone generator and a broken digital delay unit. A variety of apparent loops are blended in shifts, and the whole moves through the air in your head like a buttery soft saw blade, slowly unwinding its way across the room. There are parts that have a weird similarity to some of *No Pussyfooting*, but let's assume that's unintentional.

Through no fault of my own, I find it easy to overlook British bands. Too often they seem to be bedwetters, spellbound by the kind of fashion dictates that are too irksome to even consider, so it's unusual that a new English band gets many loins stirring around here. That said, the new three-song CD by Chicken Legs Weaver, *Killing Time* (UK Wishbone Records, email joibones@aol.com) is the kind of thing in which the English should specialize. A trio, the band takes equal parts of Stackwaddy, Dr. Feelgood, Ry Cooder-era Magic Band, and Motor Boys Motor, creating one of the most feverishly destroyed R&B sludge-fests in recent memory. With bee-stung guitars, vocals dug up in some gravel pit and rhythms as thick as those of King Snake Roost, Chicken Legs Weaver are clearly the best band that the UK has produced in a while. Let's just hope someone notices. Their first single came and went without leaving a scratch anywhere. Pray that

this one draws blood.

As unseemly, or even premature, as it might be, it is clear at this juncture that the best beard rock LP of the year has already been cut by Suntanama. The debut album by this offshoot of the No Neck Blues Band, The Suntanama (Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647), is incredible. It combines all the rural prog, stoner rock references and electric folk plonking that these clowns have been gobbling for years, coughing them up like a lungful of winning sput in a way that would have made Mallard proud. I used to think that their songs weren't bluesy enough to really succeed in the sorta rockist terms that interested them. But this album, produced by Neil Hagerty, has more than enough Exiles-style blues stagger to win me over. And dig that hat John Allen's wearing on the back cover! Stylin'! One of the more overlooked semi-recent spurts from the garden of No Neck is the eponymous picture disk LP by Eastanburia on the Japan Overseas label (6-1-21 Ueshio Tennoji-Ku, Osaka 543 Japan). The album was recorded at a session featuring Dave Nuss of No Neck, his wife Rita Ackerman and Yoshimi and ATR



from the Boredoms. Propulsive, percussive, loopy and full of sounds for soothing feral babies, Eastanburia is a full-bore freak fest. One

side is like a flux-hunch featuring Amon Duul, Yoko Ono and Langsyne. The other side is a more contemporary electro-babble version of same. Together, especially as part of gorgeous picture disk (art by Rita and Yoshimi, respectively), this is what

you'd call a real man-tit. Rita also appears as a member of Angelblood on their second CD, *Masses of the Daggers* (Capt. Trip, 3-17-14 Minami-koiwa Edogawaku, Tokyo133-0056, Japan). As on their debut, this NYC band mixes a sorta screwed-up, heavier Runaways sound with black metal inventions, no wave short-outs, and unique, art-scraped sounds. Theirs is as unclassifiable an approach as any you'll find in the modern box and should become part of all teen gal repertoires. A more recent blo-hink from this quarter is the debut LP by Enos Slaughter, *On Sunday* (Sound @ One/Conduit Creations, 81-83 Rivington St. #4A, New York, NY 10002). In concert, Enos has seemed like an evenly weighted, avant-folk collaboration between No Neck's Dave Shuford and Sunburned Hand of the Man's Marc Orleans. This is an instrumental trio album, however, with the full-time presence of Carter Thornton and an appearance by the always shifty Keith Connolly. What this means to the average listener is that there's less overt folk-stuff here, and more squeaking electric guitar and/or alto sax. The album still features plenty of drunkenly weaving



banjo/mandolin interaction, but it also harbors more rich (albeit mostly acoustic) aggression than expected. What this would mean to

the historical Mr. Slaughter (an outfielder of some note in the middle of the last century) is anyone's guess. But hey—what isn't? Carter Thornton also joins No Neck's Matt Heyner and a host of other belligerent improvisers on the debut LP by IZITITIZ. *With*



Our with Jazz (Sound @ One/Conduit Creations, as above) is a nice slab of new loft grunt. IZITITIZ are a quintet with bass, reeds, trumpet, guitar and percussion. These guys are not imbued with the superhuman gush of Heyner's other other combo, Test, but their wending, winding strings of simultaneous improv are lovely. The music moves consistently away from the arms of melodic safety towards a kind of cosmic braying that is very Velvety. Thornton's guitarwork is particularly idiosyncratic. By following the trails of neither Sharrock's power splange nor Joe Morris' easy-plucking (the current prevalent modes), he helps the results glow with full spectrum light. Nice.

Kate Village and Wayne Rogers are the proprietors of the Twisted Village concern (12 B Elliot St., Cambridge, MA 02138) and have been producing and selling some of the most fully damaged rock guitar skronk since the late '80s. Most recently, the pair has been (more or less) responsible for three brutally juiced LPs, all of which deserve studious attention. The smallest is *At Home by Wayne* (Twisted Village), which is made up of distended guitar experiments, recorded on cassette, amidst a hail of cats. He propels his guitar into a slow-moving shit-storm and leaves it to wrassle its own way free. Which is good. The next smallest is Kate and Wayne's *Quits* LP (Twisted Village) which pits the

pair's electric guitars against each other in a truly maniacal way. Anyone who has seen this duo play live will be quite prepared for this onslaught of hair and feedback. Others may be a bit

cowed by it. Which is great. Largest of the three is Major Stars' *Distant Effects* LP (Squealer, www.SquealerMusic.com), which is the third studio album by a quartet that also includes bassist Tom Leonard and drummer Dave Lynch. Unlike the




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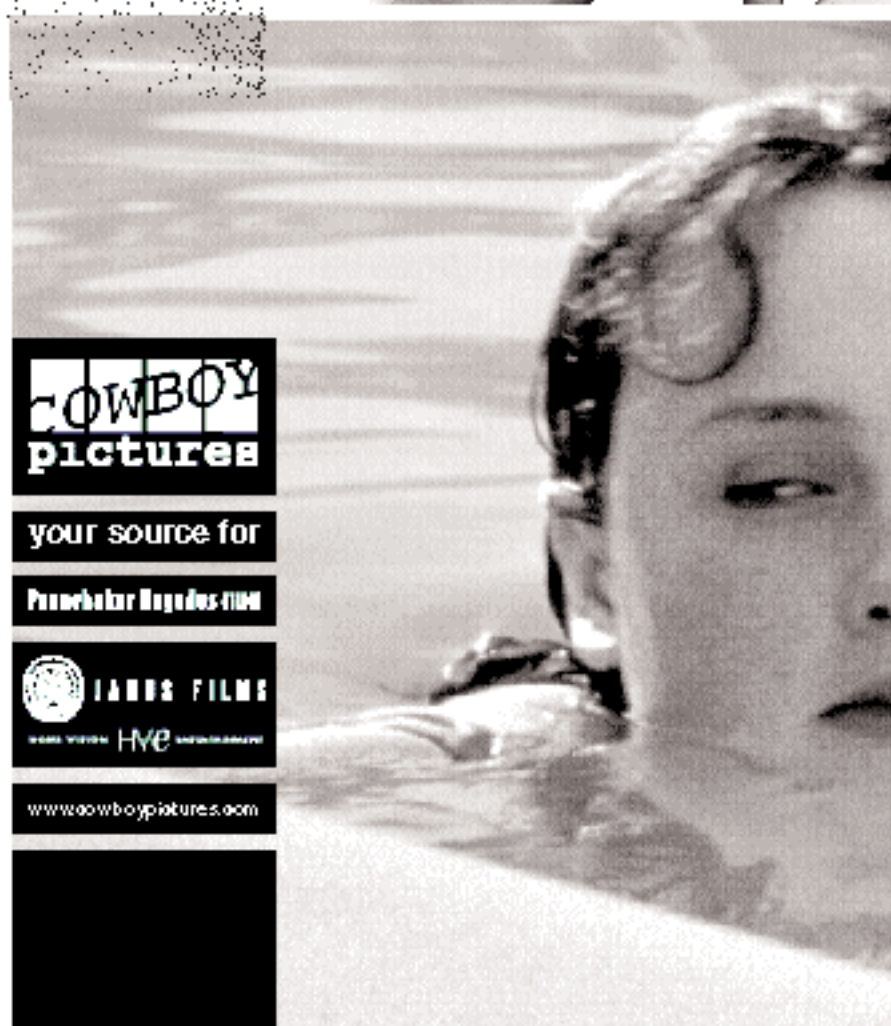
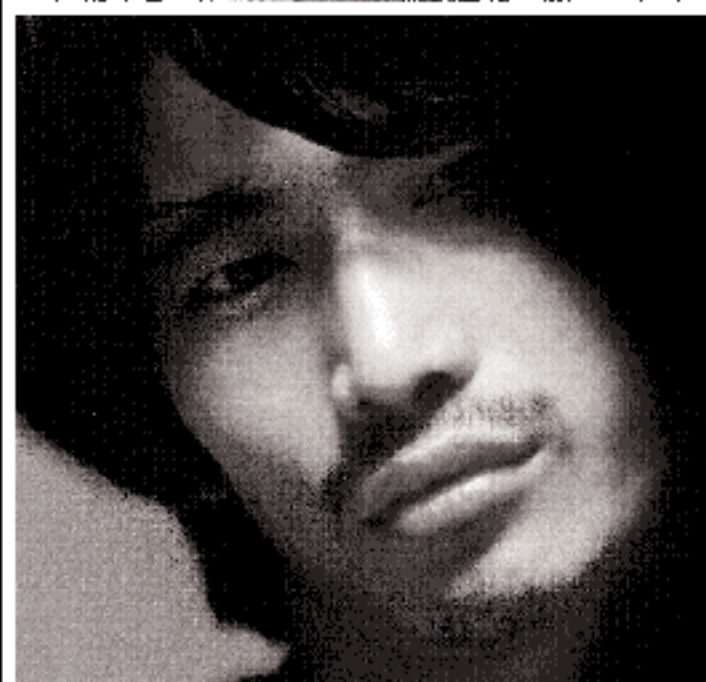
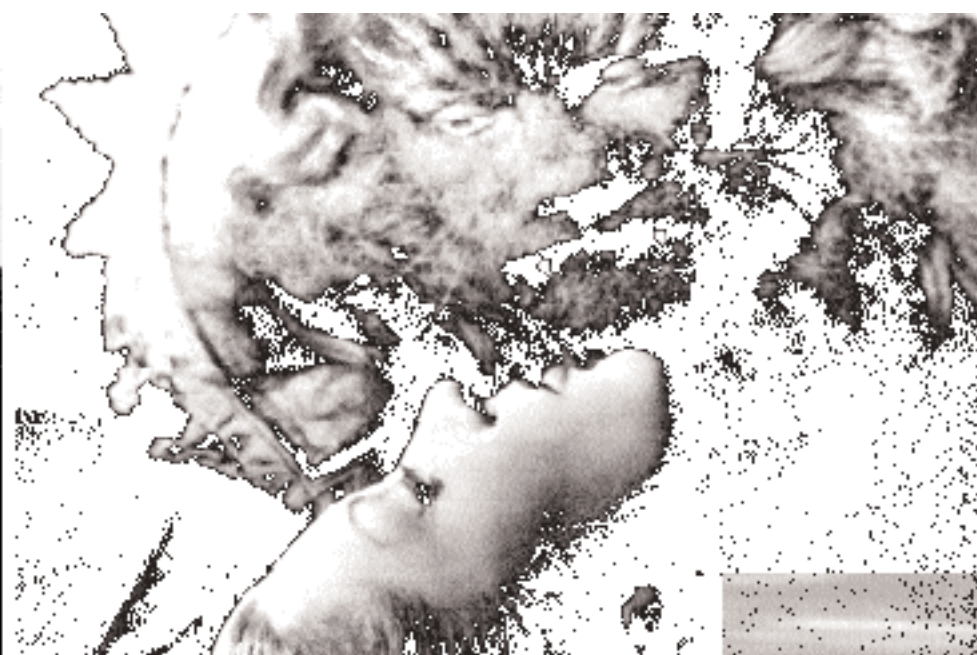
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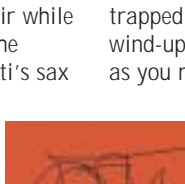
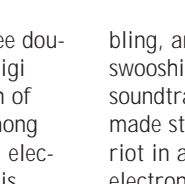
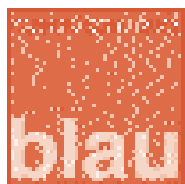
form-evaporating freedom of the other two albums, this one forces the frenetic string gawp into semi-graspable rock-shaped molds. Even on the 14-minute-plus "Elephant," the rhythm section keeps all the gremlins flinching and moving. There are even touches here that refer to the band's well-known fondness for English space-folk, although the over-riding feel is one of mass and volume. Which is fantastic. But where is Kate's solo album?

A wonderfully opaque piece of improvisation has been released on the intriguing Fringes label (c/o Giuseppe Telasi, via A. Volta 6, 20052 Monza, Italy). It is an LP, *The Title Is Postura*, performed by soprano saxophonist Alessandro Bosetti and three double bassists: Peter Kowald, Luigi Musso and Astrid Weins. Each of these players is known for (among other things) associations with electronics improvisers, and there is indeed some crackling in the air while this thing plays, even though the sources are all acoustic. Bosetti's sax moves in tight, squealing circles, while the double basses effect scrambling arco noise cascades and dizzily plonked pizzicato cluster-gropes. There are passages where things are much more "standard"-sounding than

this, natch, but the persistence of the lineup's bottom-feeding prerogative gives everything a goddamn whale-like beauty. Thick globules of low lunar notes will swim right up your nostrils and stay there. So widen up, now!

Another swell Italian label is Qbico (<http://members.planet.it/freewww/qbico>). They have released five LPs thus far and each one is a little bit stranger than the last. Or so it seems. The most recent two are *For the Love of...* by Evan Parker and Frank Perry and *1st Trip* by Baroque Bordello. Parker and Perry are, of course, heavyweights from the British improvising community. Although in recent years Perry's percussion work has often skirted the edges of so-called "new age music," his best known early work was as a member of Keith Tippett's incredible collective, Ovary Lodge. Parker, one of the founders of the Incus label (among other things) is one of the most highly respected saxophone-logicians to have emerged from the Old World. This duo album was recorded in '72 and has crunchy sonic textures, perhaps most easily comparable to King Crimson's *Earthbound*. According to the liner notes, the concert was supposed to be a trio date

with Derek Bailey on guitar, but power problems forced Evan and Frank to play as a duo. Perry's work here is wildly dynamic. He moves through his kit in ways that recall the off-balance surgery of Jamie Muir. Parker's soprano segments are also ripe, displaying a firm mastery of clucking snake symbolism. By the time the pair really get down for the bongos-and-filagree finale, you'll be standing on your chair shouting. *1st Trip* is the second



volume of Qbico's vinylization of early cassettes released by Makoto Kawabata of Acid Mothers Temple fame. This one reissues a trio session, recorded in '79 with one side of grody homemade instrument rambling, and another of electronic swooshing, supposedly recorded as a soundtrack to aerobics. The homemade stuff sounds like a slow-motion riot in a glass rack behind a bar, the electronic part is more like being trapped inside some horrible broken wind-up doll. Together, these pieces, as you might imagine, form a unique arch of aural delight. Can't wait for the label's next smut.

Conrad Schnitzler is one of the more perplexing of the many legendary figures associated with the Krautrock underground. Yeah, he was in the original versions of both Tangerine Dream and Kluster, and he recorded some very vaunted solo LPs, but the only ones that have ever been available around here just didn't sound very interesting. As a consequence, it was always kinda tough to accurately assess his rep and the hype surrounding it. Much of his legend, it was reported, rested upon the work contained on his second and third solo LPs, *Rot (Red)* and *Blau (Blue)*. Having searched for many years, I can attest that original copies of these records never come on the market. Never. So it was pretty amazing to hear that they were both about to get a legit reissue from Germany's premier mystery label, Very Good Records (verygoodrecords.de). Better still, both albums are as whacked as their reputations contend. *Rot*, from 1972, uses crude synthesizer technology for strange combinations of continued tones and effectoid spronging. It's quite great and unlike anything else from the era. *Blau* uses the same combinations of loops, sequences and blaps, but in a different way, suggesting little fields of percussion robots, clackingly falling over in endless cascades. It's a great, great sound and these albums are highly recommended



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to anyone with even the merest interest in electronic kuck or the lineage of German undergroundism.

Connie Acher's first couple of LPs were a bit loose on their moorings. Ms. Acher's mode was definitely folk-ish, but there was a persistent outsider-flange that made her work redolent of such genuine odd socks as Jandek and Leslie Q. On her third LP, *For the Love of It* (Flipped Out, PO Box 8656, Albany, NY 12208), Connie is joined by Blind Drunk John, and the resulting album is far more trad than anyone might've dared dream. True, a song like "Leaping Frogs" sounds more like an underwater version of "Dock of the Bay" than it does a Bonnie Raitt demo or something, but much of the material here has the same kinda boozy swing that propelled the best Minnesota folk-blues releases of the '60s and '70s. How intentional this might be is purely speculative, but this would be an easy record to recommend to even the stodgiest turd on the block. Its kilter is

surely off, and this becomes more apparent the more closely you listen, but the general gestalt is so damn pleasant you're in for a treat no matter how square you happen to be.

Since Graham Lambkin fled England and the snug embrace of the Shadow Ring, he has been relatively quiet. Thus, it was with great pleasure that we note a solo LP under Graham's name, *Poem (For Voice & Tape)* (Kye Recordings, c/o Swill Radio, P.O. Box 9401, North Amherst, MA 01059-9401). The music on the album seems to be made of two elements—the first is a very slowed-down recording of a human voice, the second is the sound of a shower. This may seem to be a rigid tactical approach, but it is far less monochromatic than you might suppose, and as the album plays it transforms the limited horizons of its source material into a full, open palette. The temporal dislocation of the primary vocal, mixed with the real-time playback of the water-based improvisation, connects to cause a





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shift in perceptual reality if the listener pays enough attention. Actually, the same thing can happen if you drift off, so don't be afraid to snooze. This is a lovely, unexpected direction for Graham to turn his devotion to the avant-bedroom. Let's hope he continues to move away from the known, at a more goodly pace.

The most curious Australian group (since the demise of Mu Mesons, anyway) is probably the Menstruation Sisters, and it's just dandy that their long-promised LP, *Dead at Slug's* (Menlo Park Revordings, PO Box 1652, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276-1652) is finally here. A hard-to-fathom mess of concentrated noise, it fully delivers on the promise of the Sisters' long-ago triple-7" set. The musical approach on *Slug's* is a bit more rock-like than it was on that triple pack (or on the albums of the Sisters' precursor band, Phlegm). Indeed, everybody here romps along like there's a goddamn rodeo in town, acting at times as though what they were doing was some sorta classic rock fiesta, when in fact it sounds like they're being killed inside a big steel barrel or something. There's not a whole helluva lot of info with the record, so you can't really tell when, where or with whom it was recorded, but if you like the mystery of sobbing butter, you'll be wowed by this one. There's also a new solo LP by the best-known member of the Sisters, Oren Ambarchi. Besides his crazy free-rock improv work, Oren also records stuff with "serious" new music ensembles, as well as in techno-electronic formats, and also on solo guitar. His new two-LP set, *Suspension* (Staubgold, Agrippinaufer 6, 50678 Koln, Germany) is ostensibly one of his guitar records, although there's a side of remixes by Jim O'Rourke, Phil Niblock, Michael J. Schumacher and others. And really, even the non-remixed stuff sounds a whole lot less like guitar than it does electronic tone-field-work. Big globs of sound emerge, cluster and disperse, leaving faint ghost-clouds trembling in their wake. Fans of hot pickin' beware!

Just arriving in the last few moments is a new CD by Paul Flaherty, Greg Kelley and Chris Corsano, entitled *Sannyasi* (Wet Paint Music, P.O. Box 1024, Manchester, CT 06045). Flaherty is a longtime improvising shadow giant, whose magnificent reed work stretches back decades. Kelley is a trumpeter best known for his insanely quiet improvisations with nmperign (a Boston-based collective with a coupla great disks on Twisted Village) as well as appearances in a variety of other New England new music contexts. Corsano is one of the best drummers of his generation. He has recorded with Flaherty before, and has played in all kinds of post-core and free jazz units across the upper East Coast.

Sannyasi is the first recording of these three as a specific trio, but it shows high levels of cross-neural communication, and a wonderful empathetic gush of emotive pan-substantiation. Everybody plays like crazy (even Kelley, who is known for a certain tonal reserve), and the level of un-clicked forward motion could not be higher. There are tons of freak-moves, plugged in amidst a kinda small-group

Coleman/Cherry vibe, and everyone is clearly lunging for the gold key hanging from the ring of the o-mind. But they don't get in each other's way while doing it. High energy improvisation rarely blends chaos and good manners in so sumptuously yearning a way. None of these guys has ever made a false move that I'm aware of, and this new album is a wonderful addition to the discographies of three great players.

On a completely different brain track, we find the new LP by Norway's kings of freakbeat sweetness, the Dipsomaniacs. Stethoscopic Notion (Apartment Records, Sandakervn. 11/2, 0473 Oslo, Norway) is the band's fourth album (the CD version was released by Camera Obscura Records, P.O. Box 5069, Burnley, VIC 3121 Australia). Originally a solo project of Oyvind Holm, the Dipsomaniacs have matured into a real band—a fully cooperative quartet, whose music lives in the real world as well as in the studio. This new album is very evolved in most relevant pop terms. Like recent work from Guided By Voices, it folds the textures of pure UK '60s-ism back into the mash that was developed in its wake by bands

like Big Star, Runt and others. It's not like the album is full of specific cops or anything, but the vibe is rich, full and quivery—a smooch of wonderful influences, blended in new ways by four guys whose native tongue is not easily deciphered. To hear them ladle up something that reminds me of everything from Tyrannosaurus Rex to the Flying Burrito Brothers, without even one lyrical aside about smoked fish, is a triumph of some sort.

In an archival perusal of forgotten releases, we came across two Ed Sanders CDs released by the Olufsen label (Uraniavej 12, 1875 Frederiksberg C, Denmark) that seemed to have escaped everyone's radar eyes. The earlier of the two is 1988's *Songs in Ancient Greek*, the more recent, 1996's *American Bard*. Sanders is, of course,

one of America's premier poetic movers. He founded the Fugs, ran the Peace Eye Bookstore, edited *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts*, still publishes *The Woodstock Times* and has written a groaning shelfload of books that range from fiction to history to poetry most glorious. On these two albums Ed is in fine form. *Songs*

combines English translations of Hellenic texts and lyrics sung in the original Greek. *American Bard* surveys Sanders' career, including a reprise of the Fugs classic "Morning Morning," as well as setting a variety of his more recent work to music. The accompaniment is similar to that on the Fugs' reunion albums, which some have criticized as sounding "too contemporary."

Steadier hands have heard this stuff for what it is—gasps of eternal beauty from across the great divide. Whether or not the keyboards sometimes sound like the Eurythmics is beside the point. Sanders is one of the living treasures of American literature. He has internalized the work of everyone from Sappho to Ginsberg and has combined it all into a wonderful hymn to the possibilities of ecstatic existence. These two CDs are great additions to his canon and should be known.

One of Sanders' still active contemporaries is Charles Plymell, a writer, publisher,



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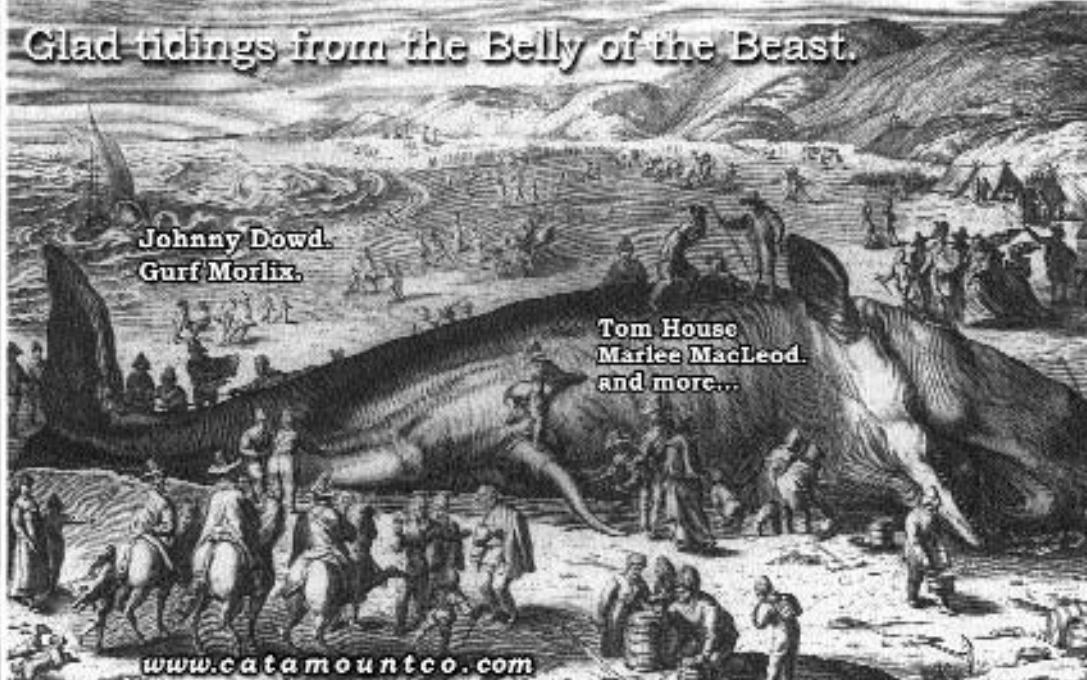


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


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collage-artist and hooligan. Plymell's writing is only fitfully available. He has a tendency to show up most often as a footnote to history—he printed the first edition of Robert Crumb's *Zap*, for instance. But Charley is a great stylist and thinker, and there have just been a few good little publications of his work. One is *Reefer Madness in the Age of Apostasy* (Butcher Shop Press, 529 Beach 132 St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694), a nice polemical booklet by this seen-it-all hipster, dealing with the idiocy of the so-called war on drugs. Plymell hits all the right notes and uses his experiences in the hip communities of the latter part of the 20th Century, as well as his years teaching prisoners, to illustrate his points. You'll nod your head so fiercely while reading this that spit will fly all over the place, so be careful. And be sure to order an extra copy to give to one of the young people in your life. They could definitely stand to read his opinions. Plymell has also been the subject of a great series of broadside pamphlets from 12 Gauge Press (email: 12gaugepress@sbcglobal.net). The latest is called *Song for Neal Cassady*, and it has a great cover pic of Charley and Neal on the street in San Francisco in 1963. The poem is equally retelling the legend of Dean Moriarty (and its aftermath) in couplets and triplets whose viewpoints and rhythms are far different than Kerouac's (the primary bard of Cassady's saga). Plymell is one of the last of his breed – a real American outlaw who breathes life into his culture. Check him out.

Another poet worth investigating is Gerald Locklin, a California-based writer who has been going at it for decades without too much acclaim outside the community. His latest title is a small book called *The Mystical Exercycle* (The Chuckwagon, 9 Robandy Rd., Andover MA, 01810), and it's broken into two parts. The first is poetry about specific paintings, reflections on content, technique, history or just something serendipitous that was ignited while viewing canvas. The second batch is of general poems, done in Locklin's trademark style, plainspoken and dealing with matters of the day and/or eternity. Locklin's work makes you recall how Southern Californian in nature the work of his friend Charles Bukowski, was. But Locklin's poems are usually less rancorous than Buk's. He's easy to read, easy to enjoy and should be approached by you. Also very easy-to-take is the poetry of Lynne Savitt. Her latest collection is *The Transport of Grandma's Yearning Vibrator* (Myshkin Press, 2646A Riverside Dr., Wantagh NY 11793) and it's her best yet—funny, sexy, hot-blooded words and images from a writer whose work embraces the eternal now better than anyone's. Ms. Savitt's poetry has always been about the passage of meat

through time and space. This new book combines the past, present and future of meat in a wonderful way. It's sentimental but not mawkish, and built with elegance and power. Great stuff.

If your attention span is too short to endure whole, entire books, there are some good mags out there that might tickle your fancy. First, in every way, is *Shuffle Boil* (Listening Chamber, 1605 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703). Edited by David Meltzer and Steve Dickson, it is "a magazine of poets and music." There's writing about music (Tosh Berman on Joe Meek, George Herms on Sonny Stitt), there's writing by musicians (Larry Ochs, Steve Lacy), there's all kindsa great shit – poetry, prose, liner notes, history, interviews, the works. The debut issue is fantastic and more should be along soon. Another good new music mag is *50 Miles of Elbow Room* (105 Luquer St. #10, Brooklyn, NY 11231). Edited by Adam Lore, the second issue has excellent pieces on Louis Moholo (an interview by William Parker), Otha Turner, the late June Tyson and others. It's a well-stirred blend of loft jazz, country blues and beyond. And finally here is issue #16 of the always great *Feminist Baseball* (c/o Jeff Smith, PO Box 9609, Seattle, WA 98109). This one has an excellent Joe Piccuch piece on the time he spent with John Fahey in Salem, lots of good stuff about weird films (from Godard to splatter), a worthy review section and blather galore. Also fresh is issue #8 of *Mineshaft* (16 Johnson Pasture Rd., Guilford VT 05301), edited by Everett Rand, and featuring a very good selection of writing and art by Robert Crumb, Darlene Fife and Robert Head (these latter two were the drivers of the legendary underground newspaper *NoLa Express*), Tommy Trantino, Irving Stettner, and various others from the bowels of the surrealist city and the heights of the visionary mountain top. Rand puts together a highly literate and eclectic mag that's always fun to read. And it's safe to say that *Mineshaft* models itself after Irving Stettner's *Stroker* (4-2-6 Chiyoda, Honjo City, Saitama, 367-0054, Japan), which is now up to issue 73. Stettner is an underground legend who was first noted for his friendship with Henry Miller, and there is still plenty of Miller in *Stroker*—pieces on Japanese translations, a reprinted Miller postcard, as well as prose, poetry and visual work that shine with a weird mix of academic thought and street-level passion. It's a splendid mix. And so are you. ☺

If you have something you think should be considered for future editions of Bull Tongue, you would be well advised to send two copies of whatever it is to: PO Box 627, Northampton MA 01061 USA.



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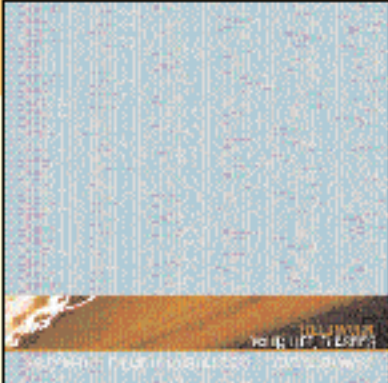
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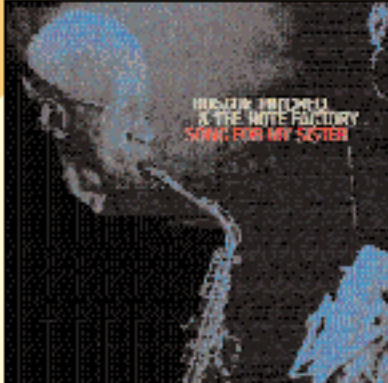
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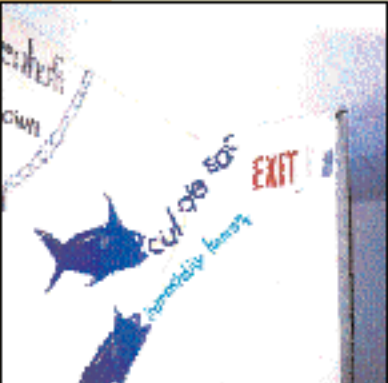
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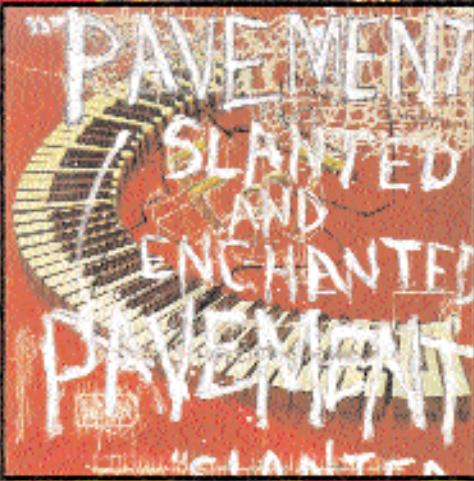
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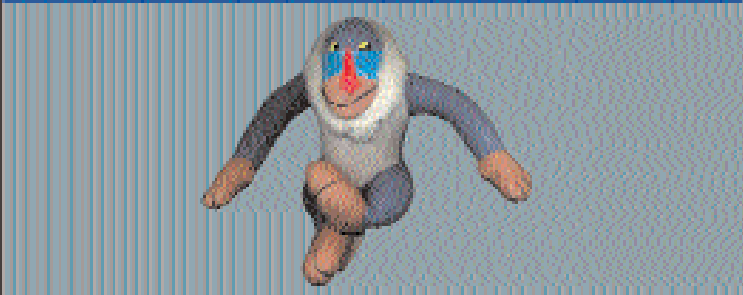
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Hot Hot Heat

MAKE UP THE BREAK DOWN



the eagle has landed

continued from next page tossing aside his IOU before we'd even staggered free of the parking lot, warming to his campaign for the evening ahead.

From there, we made it to Austin's legendary 6th Street—wall-to-wall bars stretching from the freeway to the river, modeled on New Orleans' Bourbon Street, minus the strip clubs, which in later years would benefit the city's burgeoning self-awareness as the Live Music Capital of the World. I managed to put a call in to my roommates, including my future wife, to tell them the car was now abandoned and they should join us at their peril. With a growing entourage of half a dozen, we drank our way bar by bar toward the river, Eagle springing for drinks, oysters by the dozen, inviting strangers along with us. Enlisting me to sign the credit card carbons when he was long since incapable, he casually remarked, "I'm surprised you can even hold on to that thing, considering how hot it is." Turns out the card belonged to his soon-to-be-ex-wife, unwisely not yet canceled. Somewhere in there, hanging back from the others, I remember him lamenting his disintegrating marriage. "There's just nothing between us anymore, man," he said. "Sexually. If I could just find somebody for her, some friend I could trust, maybe spice things up. And if I could be there to watch...."

"Sorry, Eagle," I managed. "I don't think I can help you."

There were other run-ins, thankfully now suppressed in the cotton of memory. I drove him to the airport and witnessed a full pint of J&B hit the pavement as we entered the concourse, which he sidestepped with a practiced flair and kept walking. Once in Houston, I met him at a bar, and over the course of the evening, he managed to seduce the woman I was with and take her home with him. This, I took it, was also not unprecedented.

I lost touch with him—hid from touch would be closer to it—and moved to New York with my then wife. We saw him take a bow at the festival, and later read in the *Village Voice* how he had turned down an interview with the *New York Times'* Vincent Canby because, "I have to watch my favorite TV show—*The Jetsons*." Henkel tells a story of a meeting with Jersey Films' Michael Shamberg, then at Warner Bros., where Eagle suggested Shamberg's female co-producer have sex with them to seal the deal. If the only power you have entering the film business is the ability to say no, an unreasoning arrogance toward the values and gifts they come bearing, well, that only works until you're up against the glass ceiling. After that, it's just plain suicidal.

The last time I saw Eagle was 1984, Valentine's Day, when my wife took a call from some mumbling entity on the other end. "I think it's Eagle," she said. "Whatever you do, don't let him in this apartment."

"Yeah, we're at the airport," Eagle said. "I can't get ahold of the guy I'm staying with, and I'm low on cash. I was wondering if I could borrow \$25."

"Sure," I told him, a fair price for my privacy. "Just buzz; I'll meet you downstairs." Turns out "we" was him and the cab driver, whose fare took up \$20 and change. Eagle exited the cab carrying a valise and a basketball, and asked if I could stand him a

few drinks while he told me his story.

"I'm tapped," I said. "You've got the last of it."

"Well, hell, I've got five bucks left," Eagle said. "Let's get a drink." Turns out Eagle's marriage was now terminal, which meant, I suppose, that the credit cards had all been canceled. The guy he was staying with was someone he had met at a film festival nine months earlier, who told him if you're ever in New York, feel free to stay in my loft. For some reason, he wasn't answering his phone. When our money was gone, I walked Eagle back out to the corner of 50th St. and Ninth Avenue, where a light rain was now falling. He dropped the basketball and it stuck to the sidewalk like a lead balloon.

"Eagle," I finally asked him, "why are you carrying a basketball?"

"That's how I'm gonna make my money, man," he explained. "I was an all-state guard. I'm gonna go down to Washington and 4th St. where there's top-dollar pickup games and get me some cash. Don't worry about me, man. I'll be fine."

"Good luck," I said, genuinely, and watched him disappear into the swirl of mist, midtown framed behind him in a halogen glow. Six months later, I started hearing from film types about this crazy Texan hanging out at Great Jones Street café. "The first time I met him, he asked to borrow 50 bucks," I heard more than once.

Like Townes Van Zandt, another colorful Austin denizen who spent one too many mornings contorted, involuted, crucified to the bar at the Hole in the Wall, and who also seemed to have a predestined sense of his own encroaching mortality, Eagle died at almost 50, suffused with painkillers, trying not to take a drink, hoping at the last his memory might fade into what most generously might be called legend. At the time of his death, he had an ITVS grant to develop a project called *My Dog Bit Elvis*.

In his films and in his life, Eagle exploited the horse-trading that goes on between gallows humor and capitalism, and the soft glowing ember of heroism that's the last thing the spirit gives up, like Jim Bowie laid up in bed, twin pistols at his side, or Davy Crockett swinging Ol' Betsy. We all set our last stand in our mind, way down at the far end of its last unused corridor. Our self is buoyed on the assumption of what we'll never sink beneath, of that which will not prevail. And for some of us, blown by the silent currents at the bottom of the ocean, off the map, along some inverse meridian or broken trench built for the world's detritus, that ideal is the last thing we see, and the only pole star we have left to grasp at.

For Eagle, going down that last time, the weight of inevitability and literary symmetry and rough-hewn karma proving ill-conceived ballast, I'd like to think of him as grappling for oxygen to the very end, breathing death big, the way he breathed in life. Thus in the style of our exit is set the walls of our legacy. If it's all the same, I wish him a hero's send-off:

"Let's go." @

Paul Cullum is a Texan-American currently living in Los Angeles who writes regularly for the *L.A. Weekly*. He is the co-author, with Harry Knowles and Mark Ebner, of *Ain't It Cool: Hollywood's Redheaded Stepchild Speaks Out*.



THE F-15 EAGLE HAD AN UNEQUALLED COMBINATION OF PERFORMANCE, FIREPOWER, AND AVIONICS. IT WAS DETERMINED THAT A VERY LOW WING LOADING COMBINED WITH HEAVY THRUST FROM THE ENGINES WOULD BE REQUIRED. U.S. FIGHTER AIRCRAFT OF THE PERIOD WERE GOING FASTER (MACH 2 PLUS), BUT WERE HEAVY AND LACKED MANEUVERABILITY COMPARED TO THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS. WHEN COMBINED WITH A CAPABLE AIRFRAME, BETTER MANEUVERABILITY CAN BE ACHIEVED BY MAXIMIZING THRUST, THEREBY MAXIMIZING ENERGY. THE PRATT & WHITNEY F100 TURBOFAN ENGINE PROVIDES THE NEEDED THRUST. EACH ENGINE IS CAPABLE

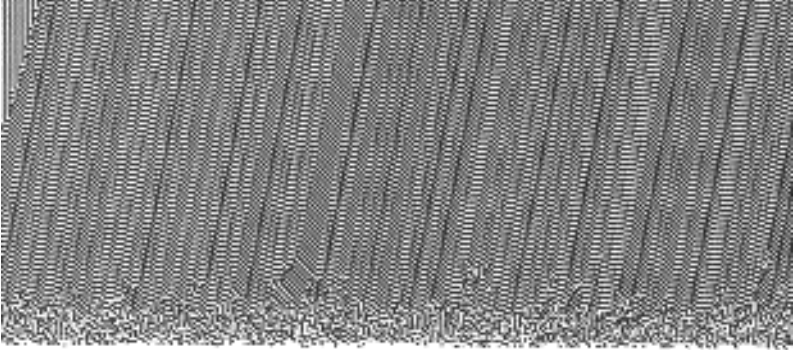
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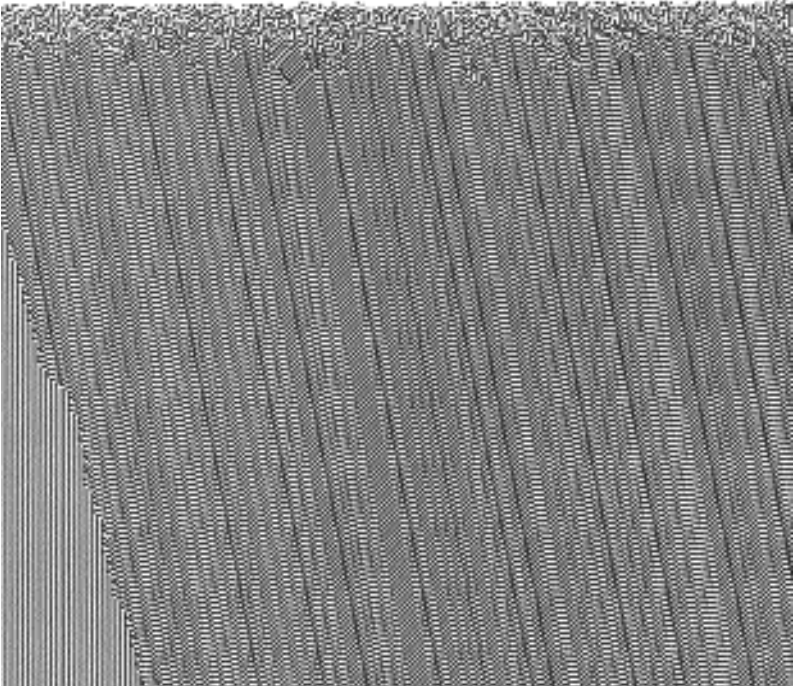


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the eagle has landed

by paul cullum

"Life has been your art.
You have set yourself to music.
Your days are your sonnets."

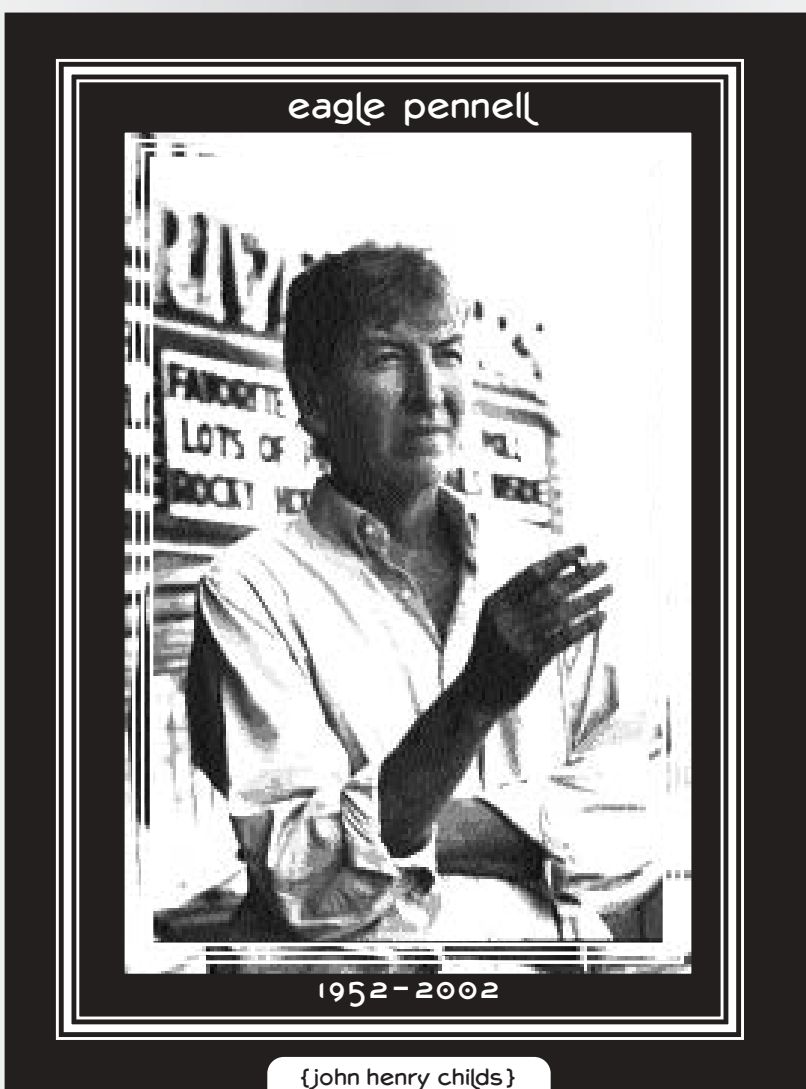
— Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Like punk legends, indie film pioneers are going to start dying off soon. And in a microcosm defined by perpetual youth, dissolution and decay don't have much room to ramp up, making it harder to get used to the idea. I guess it's never pretty. Eagle Pennell was politely called a regional filmmaker by those unaccustomed to his kind, and like many in his native Texas, he had an outsized impression of his own identity that ultimately destroyed him. In 1978, when A-list Hollywood was made up of veterans of Roger Corman's shoestring epics, and everyone else with dreams to burn now worked for Corman to replace them, the first inklings of what we now think of as independent film came courtesy of people who were too clueless or inept to follow that simple protocol. One of them was Eagle, whose shaggy dog buddy comedy *The Whole Shootin' Match* pioneered that Austin-specific sort of epic underachievement that *Slacker* later turned into an anthropological treatise. But Eagle's laconic dreamers, drunk as a lord and impossibly balanced on the thin line that separates ambition from nostalgia, were more than just literary conceits. They were Eagle in a nutshell. Like we used to say about him, the man belonged in the Alcohol of Fame; he put pop alcoholics like us to shame.

The Whole Shootin' Match, based on an earlier 16mm short called *Hell of a Note*, starred Lou Perry (nee Perryman) and Sonny Carl Davis as a couple of perpetual fuck-ups trying to work as insulation blowers or something equally improbable, and retiring to the comfort of cold beers and fevered dreams once the going gets tough. (In *Hell of a Note*, they laid asphalt, until they were fired for not realizing you weren't supposed to pee on it until it had cooled off.) This woozy testament to the comically disenfranchised, made for 20 grand in borrowed money, was also historically significant in that it was the film that Robert Redford was famously watching at the 1978 inauguration of the U.S. Film Festival in Park City, Utah when he had the epiphany that it was strays like this who could best benefit from such a festival, or something like his soon-established Sundance Institute.

"I thought a real service to the industry would be to provide a guy like that with a place to train, a place to go where he could develop his skills," said Redford in one of the Sundance catalogs from the late '90s. "It would shortcut a lot of the problems he was going to be facing." Would that it were. (For the record, Redford identified him only as a regional filmmaker. But researching a Sundance story for the *Hollywood Reporter*, I got the Sundance press liaison to confirm off the record that I was right.)

Five years later, working from a script by Kim Henkel, who had written *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and the earlier, unfinished *Eggshells* for Tobe Hooper, Eagle directed *Last Night at the Alamo* on a budget of



\$50,000, a king's ransom for his purposes, about a Houston bar scheduled for demolition come sunrise. Again it starred his hometown Mutt and Jeff—Perry as the lanky Claude, who spends most of his time feeding excuses to his wife into the payphone, and Davis as the sawed-off Cowboy, the local hero who, in an allegory of

in the battles he no doubt foresaw ahead. That moment in the spotlight on stage at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall was easily the high point of Eagle's career and life, and he walked out of it bravely. "Let's go," he said.

Perry (credited again as Perryman) was much later memorable as the sheriff who interrogates Hilary Swank

every friend or lover he ever had, and was homeless but for the grace of an acquaintance with a spare bedroom. His films are long since out-of-print, and his few obituaries mostly chose to gloss over his excesses. But in a real way, it was those excesses, that danger, which he faced wall-eyed but resolutely, that was his life's work.

I first met Eagle in probably 1982 at the Rice Media Center in Houston, where I had accompanied a straggling, three-legged film called *Taking Tiger Mountain* that I scripted (with William Burroughs and others, however unlikely) out of the raw footage of a rival feature. That is, director Tom Huckabee, with me as his witless accomplice, took an unreleased feature film about the J. Paul Getty III kidnapping, starring an undiscovered Bill Paxton, and turned it into a futuristic *Manchurian Candidate*, loosely based on the radical feminism of *The SCUM Manifesto*, by adding layers and layers of audio—even going so far as to hire a lipreader to tell us what dialogue we were stuck with. Out of such desperation and pluck, Eagle no doubt pegged me as somebody up for a challenge, with enthusiasm still to burn. Over drinks (naturally), he enlisted me to write something called *The King of Texas*, earlier started with Henkel I was to eventually learn, which was to be a loose adaptation of *The Iceman Cometh*, Eugene O'Neill's great paean to alcoholics, transplanted to the tent cities just then springing up among Texas' newly homeless. The one touchstone he had was a painting of Sam Houston receiving Santa Ana's surrender at the Battle of San Jacinto beneath a spreading live oak.

Out of such plans, I wound up with a couple of Eagle adventures now cauterized into my memory. I emphasize that my experiences were by no means unique. What still 20 years later seems fairly miraculous to me that I survived, I'm sure he experienced with someone, somewhere, every night of his life. If constitution belies character, then his was steadfast and impervious.

The first was when he asked me to pick him up outside the Americana Theater one afternoon in Austin so that we could discuss our impending collaboration. Approaching the car, he veered to the driver's side and told me to slide over, he'd drive. When I thought better of this, he climbed into the backseat and had me chauffeur him. Following his impressionistic directions, we headed for the Hill Country in search of a mythical Mongolian barbecue joint much prized from his youth. After several hours, it magically appeared, with the added proviso that the owner wasn't prepared to accept credit cards. Eagle's hangdog manner and shy, polite demeanor convinced him of our virtue, and he told us we could send him the money later. The first thing Eagle did was ask for a wine list, and wound up ordering three bottles of champagne, with the tab stretching to several hundred dollars. I remember him casually

continued on previous page

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GLOSS OVER HIS EXCESSES. BUT IN A REAL WAY,
THOSE EXCESSES WERE HIS LIFE'S WORK.

the real Alamo, defends the bar's honor against the proprietor of the Mexican restaurant next door in a tequila-drinking contest. Shot in a gauzy black-and-white by Gus Van Sant's early cinematographer Eric Alan Edwards (*My Own Private Idaho*), this one was a little more mythic in its preoccupations—a stationary western, perhaps, or a self-medicating rodeo where the heroes ride barstools and pray they can hang on until last call. In fact, Eagle once claimed in an interview that he'd changed the spelling of his name in homage to Harry Carey Jr.'s character, 2nd Lt. Ross Pennell, in John Ford's *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*. But then Eagle was always one to print the legend.

Introducing the film at the 1983 New York Film Festival, Eagle quoted Clark Gable in *The Misfits*: "Just head for that big star straight on. The highway is under it. It'll take us right home." He also managed to slip in William Holden's final words in *The Wild Bunch*, the ones that will lead them to certain death, unconsciously aligning himself with Sam Peckinpah

in *Boys Don't Cry*, and Davis was the fast-food customer who gets Judge Reinhold fired in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* ("Put your little hand in the cash register and give me back my money"), and both have made a living as actors ever since, more or less (even if Perry spent time in the Big House after a local cocaine sweep caught him with a million dollars in cash underneath his house that he couldn't explain). But that was it for Eagle. He directed three more films—*Icehouse*, *Heart Full of Soul* and *Doc's Full Service*, none of them especially watchable. (Although, to be fair, *Icehouse*, scripted by Melissa Gilbert's then-husband Bo Brinkman for the two of them to star in, a thoroughly unpleasant cross between *Badlands* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, should be required viewing for the entire Screen Actors Guild membership, lest they think their new president is the innocent she once played on *Little House on the Prairie*). When he finally died on July 20th, a week shy of his 50th birthday, Eagle had been in out of rehab countless times, had alienated virtually

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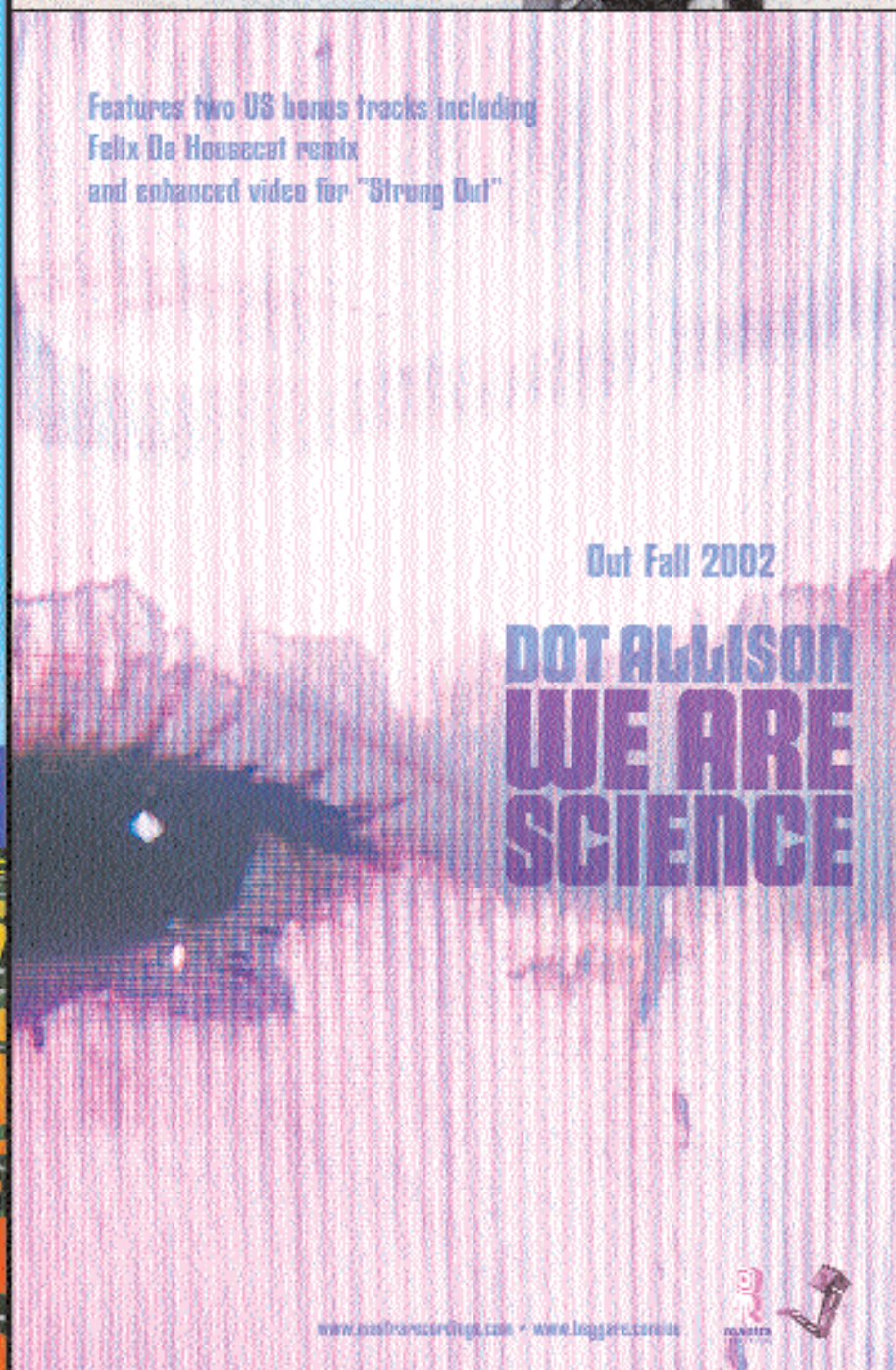
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